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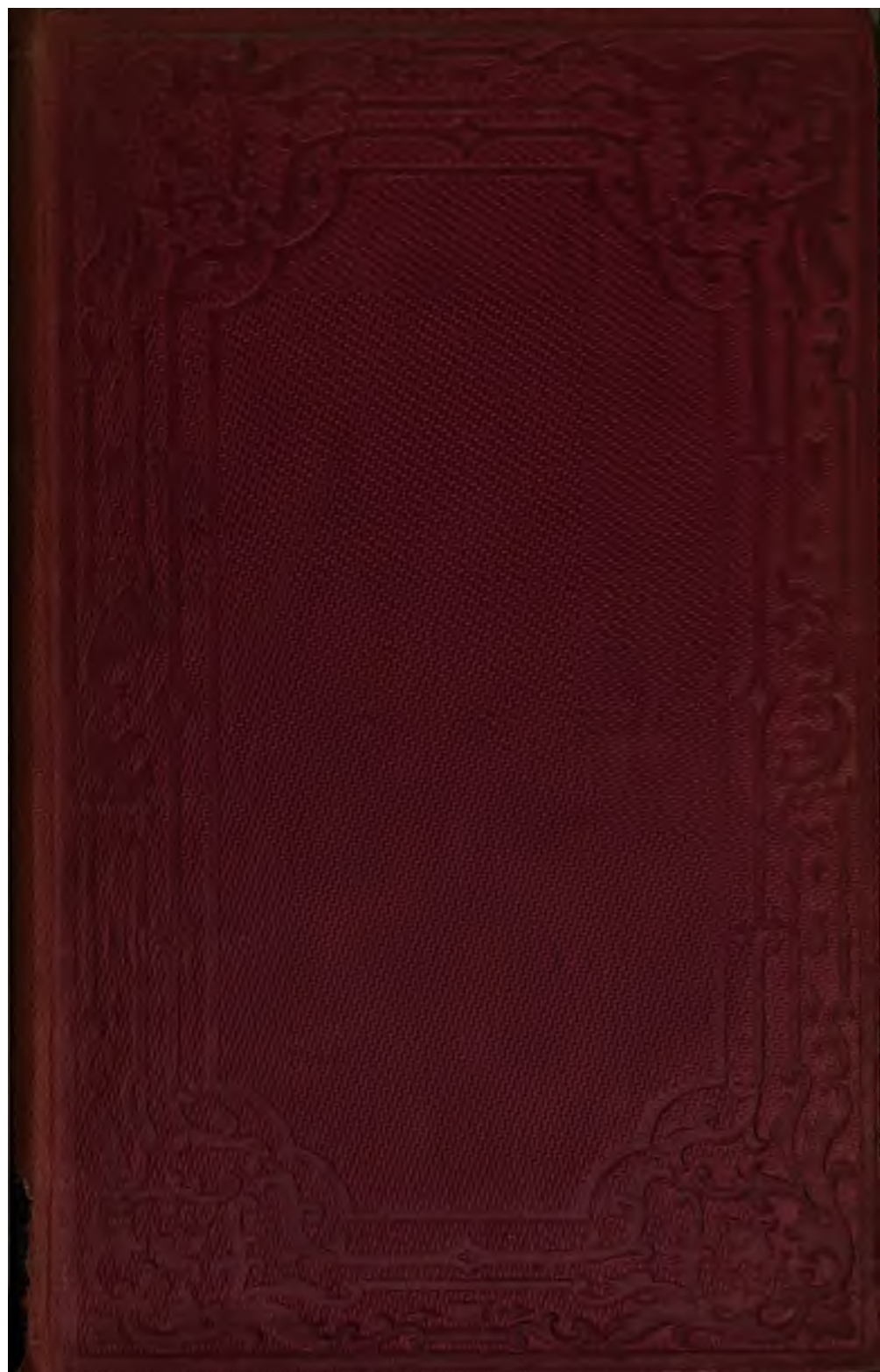
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RIAGE.



o see,
r o'er shall be.
end,
an they intend."

OROUGH STREET.

JULIA;
OR,
THE NEAPOLITAN MARRIAGE.

And other Tales.

BY
MARGARET TULLOCH



"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend."

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THE TWINS:

A TALE OF THE CHOLERA AT NAPLES.

THOSE foreigners who passed the summer of 1847 at Naples must remember the general dismay and gloom which overwhelmed all ranks during the months of June and July, when that beautiful city was for the second time visited by the cholera, and, the malady attacking the higher classes, who had entirely escaped on its first appearance, the mortality among both high and low became fearful. Most of the *noblesse* fled to their country-places for safety, while others shut themselves up in their houses, as if they had been in a town infected by the plague, receiving their food by means of a basket, which they let down from the window by a

rope, and drew up again every morning. But the most extraordinary panic was that which seized the native doctors.

Many of the medical men, who, from being daily in the habit of witnessing illness and death, might have been supposed superior to nervous fears, were so overcome by them, that they either fled from Naples, or, feigning indisposition, they took to their beds, and refused to attend cholera patients when they were sent for.

In one of the small streets in that part of the town called the *Corpo di Napoli*, there resided a very young physician, who had but recently succeeded his father and begun to practise for himself. Although he had only just then completed his twenty-first year, he was universally esteemed for his professional skill, as well as for his amiable qualities, and was already much consulted and respected by his brethren of the faculty, notwithstanding the probability of his one day becoming a formidable rival to them.

This young man (whom I shall call Antonio) was also an object of interest in the

neighbourhood, from his having an only sister, a twin with himself—a girl of uncommon beauty, to whom he supplied the place of both father and mother. They were entirely devoted to each other, and, with an old nurse who had brought them up, they continued after the death of their parents to reside together, Annina refusing all offers of marriage (of which, though portionless, she had many), and living a life of the strictest retirement, never being seen but when she attended mass, where her extreme loveliness attracted universal admiration. Various were the conjectures as to her reasons for leading so recluse a life. Some of her less gifted rivals ascribed her conduct to pride; but these insinuations were quickly silenced by all who had ever exchanged words with Annina, whose modest, unassuming manner was as attractive as her beauty; and the general belief was, that she had the *vocazione* to be a nun, and that nothing but her attachment to her brother prevented her withdrawing from the world and devoting herself to Heaven.

It was in the beginning of June that the cholera broke out, while Antonio was absent from Naples. He had been sent for from a distant province, to attend an uncle who was dangerously ill. Annina would have accompanied him, but, as he was obliged to perform the journey in great haste, he dissuaded her from it; and it may be supposed with what impatience she awaited his return.

“It will be of no use to write to Antonio,” said she to her nurse, “to tell him how much he will be required, now that this terrible scourge is once more here. I know he will not remain with my uncle a moment longer than is absolutely necessary, and I am also quite sure that he will never allow me to pass to-morrow evening (the *Vigilia di Sant’ Antonio*) alone; so I shall expect him by Ave Maria at the very latest, when we always go to the Church of Sant’ Antonio to pray together.”

“Heaven grant you may not be disappointed, Nenella mia,” replied the old woman; “but my heart feels very heavy: I know not why. Perhaps it is the fear of

this terrible malady that oppresses my spirits. Do not be angry with me, but I tremble when I think of our caro Antonio being exposed to it. You know how indefatigable he is ; and, if he should be seized with it and taken from us, Santa Maria ! what will become of us !”

“Nurse, nurse !” said Annina, her fine eyes filling with tears ; but raising them to heaven with firm hope, she continued—
“Talk not thus to me, you who ought rather to sustain my courage than to excite my fears ; and, above all, breathe not such words to my brother. You know what is his duty as a medical man, and would you wish to see him shrink from it ?”

“Well, well, carissima, be it as you will ; I shall never say a word to vex you,” said Maria. “And now let us go to rest, if sleep we may with the eternal ringing of the bell by the many who come in search of Don Antonio il medico.”

The morrow came, and was passed by Annina in a state of great excitement. Very numerous were the disappointed patients,

who sent in vain to the house, all assured by Annina that her brother was momentarily expected. The sun declined behind Posilippo, and gradually sank beneath the western wave; the bell of the Church of Sant' Antonio sounded the Ave Maria, but still Antonio came not; and Annina, who had waited till the latest moment in hopes of his arrival, now put on her veil, saying—

“Antonio, I dare say, has alighted at Sant' Anna, thinking to find me there; so I shall go and meet him. And, in the mean time, do you prepare supper for us, dear nurse.”

So saying she departed, and soon reached the parish church, where she found the sacristan about to close the doors; but, at her request, he agreed to leave them open for another quarter of an hour, and Annina hurried in to perform her devotions.

Scarcely had she entered, when a rapid step followed her, and, turning round, she beheld her brother deadly pale and covered with dust, who returned her embrace in silence.

"You are ill, you are sadly wearied, dearest Antonio," said she; "let us go home immediately. And what of our uncle? How did you leave him?"

"Better, dear Annina," replied he, in a hollow voice. "You shall hear all presently. But I am not come to disturb your prayers: let us unite them together. Pray for your Antonio, for never did he stand so much in need of heavenly succour."

The twins then knelt, and having devoutly performed their orisons, they took their way homewards.

Annina forbore to question her brother, seeing his haggard, worn-out looks; and, as soon as he had taken some slight refreshment, she begged he would retire to rest, determining in her own mind that she would not allow any one to know he was returned till the next morning. She then withdrew to her own little chamber, not to sleep, but to indulge in many melancholy and anxious thoughts. She loved, and was beloved by a young man of much superior rank to her own, but the attachment was a

profound secret to all save themselves ; they had not even confided it to Antonio, at the earnest request of Annina, as she feared he might blame her lover for having gained her affections, when he was aware that his family would never consent to their union. His mother was a patient of Antonio's, and the young men had become friends, this Lorenzo being frequently the bearer of messages to the former, which, in his absence, he used to leave with Annina, and in this manner their acquaintance had commenced. But though deeply in love, his conduct had been most honourable, and when accident revealed their mutual affection to each other, with equal candour and sorrow he confessed he had not a hope that his parents (who were of the highest and most ancient nobility) would ever receive the daughter of a poor *medico* as their son's bride, and entreating Annina to forgive his involuntary crime of loving her, they agreed to meet no more, and soon after she heard from her brother that he was gone to join his regiment, which was then stationed at Caserta.

It was late, but Annina was still seated at her window; the street was nearly deserted, except by the "Host" passing and repassing, and by the men who were employed to carry the coffins containing the dead to the Campo Santo, the small lights placed upon these sparkling like fire-flies in the darkness of the night, as they passed rapidly along. Annina was mournfully gazing at them, when her door was softly opened, and Antonio stood before her. She was going to utter an exclamation of surprise, but he placed his finger upon his lips in token of silence, and throwing himself on the divan beside her, he burst into tears, covering his face with his hands, as if ashamed to confess to her the cause of his emotion.

Annina tried to soothe him, and in a little he became more calm, when, rising hastily, he articulated—

"Annina, beloved sister, blush for your unhappy brother! despise him if you will, but the truth must out, and to-morrow will reveal my shame to all Naples. My dread,

my nervous horror of this cholera is such, that I cannot conquer it. I feel as if I should expire in the first house I entered. And oh ! what will become of me ? Were it not for you, dearest, I wish that the disease had entered my veins, and that this night might be my last, for how shall I ever survive dishonour ?”

Annina stood as if transfixed, on hearing this avowal. The blood forsook her cheeks, and, incapable of replying, she remained as still and cold as a marble statue ; but, by a violent effort, she at length overcame her feelings, and, looking affectionately at her brother, she said—

“No, dear Antonio, you shall not be dishonoured ; you merit more compassion than blame, and to argue with you on the subject would be in vain. A remedy must be found, and that instantly, as time presses. Remain here till I return,” added she ; “I shall go and consult our best friend, the padre Anselmo. I know he will not yet be retired to rest.”

Without waiting for a reply, she hastily

left the room. Rapidly she gained the abode of the old priest, to whom she was immediately admitted. It seemed that during her short walk the intrepid girl had made up her mind as to what she would do, and when the padre, in surprise, inquired the reason of her visit, she calmly answered—

“Father, I come not to ask your advice, but to entreat your assistance, and if you withhold that, the children of your dearest friend are disgraced for ever.”

She then explained to him the sad state of Antonio, concluding by saying, in a firm tone—

“My resolution is taken; I shall personate my brother, and do his duty for him. You know we perfectly resemble each other, we are exactly of a height, and his complexion is so delicate, it is much more like a woman’s than a man’s. There is nothing stands in my way but these long tresses,” said she, pulling out the silver pin that confined them, and allowing them to fall in all their luxuriance over her shoulders; “but they shall quickly be disposed of;” and

seizing a large pair of scissors which lay upon the table, before the priest could prevent her, she severed them from her head, and, without one glance of regret at them, she said, "I shall arrange myself better when I get home. And now, caro amico, you will return with me, and we shall dress Antonio in my gown, and when I am attired in his dress, you will come in, and before old nurse (who is now so blind, it will be most easy to deceive her) you must say that my uncle, having heard of the ravages the cholera is making in Naples, has sent a messenger post haste to command me to come to him, if I would not forfeit his favour for ever; and I (as Antonio) will insist upon the command being obeyed, and without delay you will carry him away. I know you can find means of concealing him somewhere in your house, or in the church; and I shall come there every morning to receive his directions as to what I shall prescribe, and again in the evening, to report how the patients go on."

"But, cara figlia mia," replied the old

man, deeply affected, "you know not what you would undertake; your nerves can never stand such a trial, and as discovery must follow, why risk your life in such an attempt?"

"And what would life be to me, padre, if Antonio's reputation was gone? Say no more, I implore, but show your affection for me by persuading my brother to agree to my plan."

The priest, seeing her determination was inflexible, followed her in silence to her home, where the wretched Antonio was soon informed by his sister of the arrangement she had made, which at first he faintly opposed, a struggle seeming to take place between his fraternal love and the dread of losing his fame for life; but the latter proved the stronger of the two, and he soon yielded, —nature having made a strange mistake in regard to these twins, by giving the masculine strength of mind to Annina, and all the womanly weakness to her brother.

They quickly exchanged dresses. Antonio, when attired in a gown and bonnet (the

latter put on to conceal his short hair) looked the very personification of Annina in her very palest moments; and she, having covered her newly cropped locks with the silk cap her brother usually wore, appeared his living picture, a new power seeming to be given to her to overcome her natural timidity. She stood erect, in all the dignity of her fine figure, and went herself to rouse her nurse, as there was no time to lose, day being now about to break.

The poor old Maria, scarcely awake, could with difficulty be made to understand that Annina was immediately to leave them, but when they explained that it was a precaution for her safety, and that her absence would be but a short one, she piously lifted up her hands to bestow a blessing upon her, and embracing her (supposed) darling, she suffered her to depart with padre Anselmo. Annina followed them, telling her nurse to go to bed, and that she should do the same as soon as she had seen the travellers depart, as she required a few hours' repose before beginning a day of fatigue and trial. She

then joined Antonio in the place of concealment Anselmo had found for him. It was in a cell behind one of the small chapels in the church of St. Antonio, the existence of which was only known to the priest, the entrance to it being hid by a sliding panel, which was covered by a large painting.

Annina would not allow her brother to proceed with the self-accusations he was beginning to pour forth, but, in a decided tone imposing silence upon him, she desired he would occupy the short time she could remain in giving her all the necessary instructions for the treatment of the sick (he knew the malady well in theory ; he was in Rome when it broke out the first time in Naples) ; and, having obtained these, she abruptly rose, and hurried from the cell, afraid of trusting her voice to say adieu, but promising to return again in the evening.

The sun was just rising when she reached her own abode, and, overcome by all the fatigue and excitement she had undergone, she threw herself upon her bed, and was soon in a deep sleep, which she was allowed

to enjoy for two or three hours, as Donna Maria, thinking Antonio had need of repose, determined that no one should be informed of his arrival till the morning was pretty far advanced. Annina was at length roused from her slumbers by a loud ringing at the door, and starting up, she was endeavouring to still the beatings of her heart, when Maria entering said—

“Signorino, I can keep these people out no longer; they have heard you are returned, and insist upon seeing you immediately.”

It may be imagined what poor Annina felt, but, mentally breathing a prayer to Heaven for support, she replied calmly, “I am ready,” and, taking up her hat, she followed her nurse to the door. A carriage stood there, into which she stepped, accompanied by a gentleman (the brother of the sick person to whom she was called), who only knew Antonio by sight, and, of course, never doubted that it was he who was seated by his side; he therefore began detailing the particulars of the case, to which Annina lis-

tened in silence, and with deep attention. It fortunately happened to be but a slight attack of cholera, and the remedies she administered had the desired effect of relieving the sufferer, which gave her courage to proceed to other patients, and she got through the dreadful duties of the day undiscovered, but many were the sorrowful scenes she witnessed ; and when, at a late hour, she reached her home, both mind and body were so completely exhausted, she felt ready to expire.

Having swallowed a few mouthfuls of food, she hastened to the house of padre Anselmo, and was soon once more with her unfortunate brother, whose spirits she tried to cheer, making light of her labours, and assuring him that he had nothing to dread, for as no one seemed to have the most remote idea that she was not the medico, the secret could never be discovered. Again she received Antonio's directions, and the next morning again saw her at her devoted task, which she continued to perform with unabated ardour. She had so entire a confidence in her bro-

ther's skill, she was at least spared the pain of thinking he might be sometimes mistaken in the treatment he ordered ; but she could not steel her tender, feeling heart against grieving with the afflicted ; and when she saw parents and children hourly torn from each other by this frightful scourge, her courage almost forsook her, and she felt that she should not be able long to stand the anguish she endured. Her strength gradually failed, she could take no nourishment, and became so thin, she was but the spectre of her former self. Antonio, selfish as he was, could no longer blind himself to her state, and the good padre Anselmo became seriously alarmed about her.

She had been struggling through this dreadful life for above a fortnight, and her labours had increased within the last few days, as the cholera had then reached its greatest height, and the number of deaths was appalling.

It was on the evening of the 28th of June (one of the days on which no fewer than fourteen hundred victims were carried to the

tomb), that Annina, after a day of more than ordinary fatigue, was slowly dragging her steps homewards, when she was overtaken by the servant of the Marchese di —— (the father of her lover), who begged she would hurry to his master's house, as the Marchesino, who had arrived but in the morning from Caserta, was seized with cholera.

Annina would have fallen to the ground on receiving this intelligence, if the man had not caught her by the arm, and, little imagining the real cause of her faintness, he attributed to it excessive weariness.

"Povero Don Antonio," said he, "how sorry I am for you; you look as ill as if you had the cholera yourself. Drink this water," added he (bringing her a glass from an acquajola near), "and let us hasten to my young master."

Annina put the water to her lips, and desiring the man to precede her, she hurried, as fast as her trembling limbs would permit, to the Marchese's palace, where she found the young man in all the agony of a most violent attack; but even in the midst of his

sufferings a smile of pleasure lighted up his countenance on seeing her enter.

“Antonio, caro Antonio,” cried he, “at last you are come. Give me what you please, I will take all. Death from your hands would be sweet.”

To describe the agitated feelings of the poor girl would be impossible, when she touched the clay-cold hand of her lover, and by the experience she had acquired by constant practice, she saw at once that hope was almost vain. Two other medical men entering, whom the distracted father had also called in, she became aware of the necessity of commanding herself; and having prescribed along with them, and perceiving a momentary degree of relief obtained by the patient, she hastened away, anxious to have her brother's advice, and promising to return in the course of an hour. The Marchesa, pitying her pallid looks, ordered her carriage to take her home, saying she would send it again to bring her back, an offer which Annina thankfully accepted. With great difficulty she crawled to the house of the priest after

leaving the carriage, and when she reached the cell, she was so entirely overcome that it was some time before she could articulate.

At length, bursting into an agony of tears, she threw herself into Antonio's arms, and, confessing all the story of her love, she described the sad state of the Marchesino, and entreated he would tell her if anything could yet be done to save him. Antonio heard her with mingled shame and anguish. Despair was in his countenance, for this friend was dear to him as a brother; and, striking his forehead, he exclaimed—

“Wretch that I am! it is *I* who merit a thousand deaths. I am killing you, my Annina, and I can do nothing for him you love! Oh! that I were in his place! Life is now hateful to me: I shall never more enjoy a moment's repose!”

Miserable as she was, the affectionate girl thought not of self on seeing the distress of her brother. She tried by every argument she could think of to comfort him, adding that all he could now do was to think of

some remedy that might at least alleviate the sufferings of the invalid.

Antonio shook his head, but to please her he wrote various prescriptions, to be suggested to the other doctors according to the stage of the malady she might find the poor Marchesino in, and Annina then rose to depart.

"Dio vi benedica ! best of sisters," said her brother ; "but how your hand burns ! You are in a fever, Annina, and, indeed, you are quite unequal to returning to the house of sickness to-night. I know you can do no good : there are other doctors with our Lorenzo. Be persuaded, and remain at home, at least till the morning."

"Antonio !" replied she, looking reproachfully at him, "after what I have told you, can you advise me thus ?" But, changing her tone, she added, "Good night, my dear brother, and may every blessing attend you. Look for brighter days ; and, whatever may happen to me, remember that I have entreated you will not reproach yourself. The plan was entirely my own, and, you have only yielded to my request."

So saying she hurried from the cell, and, unable to wait for the return of the carriage, she set out on foot for the abode of her lover. She had not the courage to put any questions to the servants on entering, but their mournful countenances confirmed her worst fears.

"He is still alive," whispered the one who attended her to the sick-chamber, "but in a state of complete exhaustion. The two doctors have persuaded the Marchese and his mother to lie down for a little, as he seems inclined to sleep. And now that you are come, they will probably do the same."

Annina, more dead than alive, entered the room, and the doctors repeated what the servant had told her, adding their fears that the patient was now sinking so fast, nothing but a miracle could save him.

The room being darkened, the death-like hue of poor Annina's countenance escaped observation; and, with tolerable calmness, she begged they would retire, and leave her to watch, and to call them if any change should take place. She then seated herself beside the bed, with her eyes fixed upon the

dying young man, and when all had left the room, she gave way to her intolerable grief in a torrent of tears, which fell upon his unconscious face as she hung over him and whisperingly said—

“It will be but a little moment, dearest, till we meet to part no more, where all wordly title and distinctions will be as nothing, and you may love your Annina without its being a crime.”

Softly as she uttered these words, her voice seemed to have a magical influence upon the sufferer. He slowly opened his languid eyes, and, fixing them fondly upon her, he said—

“Dear Antonio, I thought you would come and see me once more. I was dreaming of Annina, and can scarcely believe I did not hear her sweet voice. Had it been so, I should have died happy.”

“Lorenzo ! eccomi, sono teco !” (Lorenzo, here I am ; I am with you) exclaimed she, unable longer to restrain her feelings ; “and oh ! I die !”

With these words, the heart of this victim

of sisterly affection ceased to beat, and she fell a corpse by the side of her lover, who, again sinking into the lethargic state from which her voice had roused him, was, happily, never aware that his beloved had been near him ; nor was it ever known how long he survived her, as an hour passed away ere Padre Anselmo entered—the Marchese having sent for him to administer the last sacrament to his son, in case he should recover sufficiently to receive it.

The grief of the old man may be imagined on his finding Annina was no more. “Ah, I thought it would be so !” said he. “Why, alas ! did I ever consent to assist her in sacrificing herself ?” But, unwilling to betray the secret, which had cost her so dear, to the family of the Marchese, he lifted her himself from the bed, and, with the assistance of the servant, carried her into the next room, saying that, overcome by fatigue, she had fainted ; and seeing the physicians engrossed with the unhappy parents, he called one of the priests who had accompanied him, and desired him to go for a carriage ; then,

covering poor Annina's body with a cloak, he said he would carry the insensible young man to his own house, and see what could be done for him. This he accomplished without difficulty, illness and death being at that time so common that to witness them seemed to excite no sensation.

Arrived at Annina's abode, he was obliged to inform the poor old nurse of the sad truth, whose violent sorrow for some time rendered her incapable of any exertion ; but at length the padre persuaded her to perform the last offices to her darling child. And when the latter, once more attired in her virgin robes, and lovely even in death, was laid upon her bed, Anselmo went to inform the police of what had happened, and to obtain permission to carry her to the Church of Sant' Anna for the night, it being necessary to explain that cholera was not the cause of her death, as it was now prohibited for persons dying of that malady to be laid in any of the churches.

The padre determined to conceal the death of Annina from her brother until after the

funeral, and then to prevail upon him to leave Naples.

That same evening the remains of the ill-fated girl were accordingly privately conveyed to the church, and there placed upon the bier, with the usual lights on each side of it. They were left alone by all but the kind old padre, who remained to watch over, for the last time, her who had been to him as a daughter.

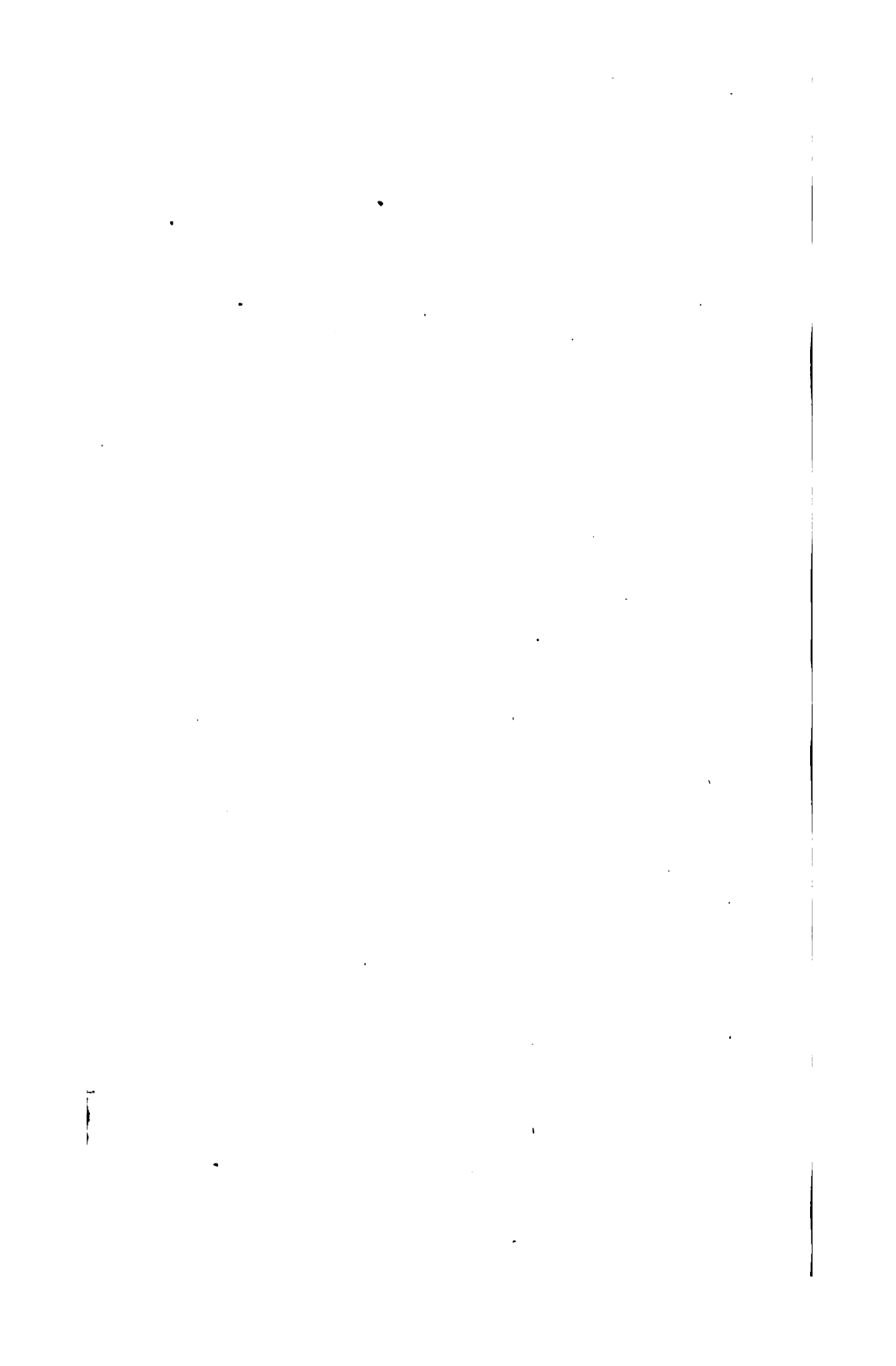
It was past midnight when Anselmo thought he heard a noise, and, turning round to see from whence it proceeded, to his terror he beheld the picture we have before mentioned move; the panel was drawn aside, and Antonio walked into the church! The priest had quite forgot that this secret door did not lock; indeed he had never thought of attempting to secure it, being well assured that no one knew of it, and never imagining that Antonio would venture from his place of concealment. The sudden surprise prevented the padre from covering the body with the pall; and consequently the first object that met the eyes

of Antonio on approaching was his dead sister ! One moment he gazed in stupefied horror, and then fell senseless upon the marble pavement.

“ Poor youth ! ” said the old man, as he raised him in his arms, “ it is cruel to revive thee to consciousness. ” And, as he expected, when returning animation brought recollection, the frantic grief of Antonio proved too much for his already over-excited nerves, and he entirely lost his reason. His glaring eyes were rivetted upon Annina, to whom he called in the most agonising accents to pardon her murderer ; and when he found she replied not, he became so violent that Anselmo, fearing he might destroy himself, hastened to call assistance, and with some difficulty he was torn from the body and carried off to a place of confinement.

The following day the wretched Antonio was placed in the lunatic asylum at Aversa, where, in a few days, he breathed his last. A short time before he expired his senses returned, and, at his earnest request, the padre was sent for, from whom he heard all

the affecting details of poor Annina's death. And, deeply penitent, he died in the arms of Anselmo, entreating that he might be buried beside his sister, which the good old padre faithfully promised and performed; and The Twins sleep together in the Church of Sant' Anna.



THE BRONZE HORSE;

A NEAPOLITAN LEGEND.

It is now some eighty years ago since there lived, in a vast old palace in one of the narrow streets that run behind the Strada Toledo, in Naples, the Principe (Prince di San Silvestro), a very distant relation of the family to whose honours he had succeeded. He had passed all his younger days in obscurity in one of the provinces with his father, who, proud of his high birth, but without the means of supporting it in the style of his equals, preferred vegetating in solitude with his only son, rather than permit him to endeavour to raise the fortunes of his house again, by entering any profession that might tarnish the dignity of his

ancient name. Shortly after the death of his father, the Principe came into his inheritance, which in reality added but little to his wealth, as it consisted merely in the old, gloomy Palazzo Cavallo, which was much dilapidated and totally unfurnished, excepting a few rooms which had been inhabited by the late prince, an eccentric character, who lived so retired and with so little show, that it was the surprise of every one how he could have squandered a very considerable fortune, when, at his death, all his estates were obliged to be sold for the payment of his debts.

The new Principe removed to Naples immediately after the demise of his relation, having lost both his father and his wife in the course of the preceding year. He had now no tie to the country, and was desirous of giving his son the advantage of a superior education to what a retired province could afford him.

They were soon quietly established in their new abode, Constantino was sent to college, and the Principe, who was very

little known in Naples, continued to live almost as much secluded as he had done in Calabria.

Upon taking possession of the Palazzo Cavallo, he found that the only remains of its ancient magnificence consisted in a very fine colossal statue of a Bronze Horse, which was placed upon a high pedestal in the centre of the court, and it frequently occurred to him how gladly he would dispose of it if a purchaser would present himself, without his pride being hurt by offering it for sale.

One winter evening, several years after his taking up his residence in Naples, when it was nearly dark, a little old man, bending double apparently from age, and with his hat so much pulled over his face as scarcely to allow any of his features to be visible, entered the court of the palace, and, meeting one of the Principe's servants, inquired if he might speak with his master.

The Prince, who was disengaged, desired that he might be admitted, and, to his surprise, the stranger (who by his accent seemed a foreigner), apologising for his intrusion,

told him that the reason of his visit was to inquire if he had any objection to sell the Bronze Horse he had seen in the court below, as he wished to become its purchaser. The Principe replied that he was willing to dispose of the statue provided he could obtain a good price for it, but that the very lowest sum he would take was 4,000 ducats. This the other declared was far above its value. However, after continuing to discuss the point for some time, he at last offered 3,500 ducats, which the Prince agreed to accept ; and the old man said he would return on the following morning to remove the Horse, and bring an order upon a well-known banker for the stipulated sum.

He then took his departure, leaving the Prince very much at a loss to imagine what could have induced this singular-looking being to make such a purchase ; and, suspecting that it must be a hoax of some one who was acquainted with his necessities, he scarcely expected to hear anything more of the matter.

Next evening, however, about the same

hour, the old man reappeared, and sent up, by the porter, bills for the 3,500 ducats, correctly made out upon the before-mentioned banker, along with a note, signed in a German name, requesting a receipt for the sum, adding that he had not been able to procure workmen to carry away the statue that morning, but that he should certainly return for it on the morrow.

The Principe, well pleased to find that he was not to meet with a disappointment, hastened to give the desired acknowledgment; but when the porter descended with it to the court, the unknown was nowhere to be seen, and after waiting some time in expectation of his return, he went upstairs again to inform his master of the fact.

More than ever amazed, the Prince felt that conjecture was vain as to such extraordinary conduct, but the next morning the first thing he did was to go himself to the banker's to find out if the money had been actually placed there.

Contrary to his almost extinguished hopes, the banker replied that the preceding day

a little man, answering the description the Prince gave, had called and paid into their hands 3,500 ducats on account of the Principe di San Silvestro, and had received from them a receipt for the same, but the German signature he gave they said none of their firm had ever heard of before.

As soon as the Prince had received his money he hurried home, with no small curiosity to see the mysterious personage again ; but no tidings had been heard of him during his absence. The Bronze Horse remained in solitary grandeur in his place, and from that day forward the German, or Jew, or whoever he might be, was never more seen at Palazzo Cavallo.

So strange was the event that the Prince could not help mentioning it to all his acquaintances, and much inquiry was made in every direction to endeavour to throw some light upon the affair, but all in vain, and after a time, except by the Principe himself, the matter was entirely forgotten.

It might be about five years after the sale of the Horse, that the Prince was roused

from his slumbers one morning, at the early hour of six o'clock, by the Abate Selvaggi, an old antiquarian friend of his, who, rushing up to his bedside in a state of great excitement, exclaimed :

“Get up, get up, caro amico ; we must instantly go and examine your Bronze Horse. I have made a great discovery, but I shall explain nothing until we have convinced ourselves by ocular demonstration of the extraordinary truth.”

The Prince, throwing on his *robe de chambre*, eagerly ran downstairs with his friend ; when the Abate, putting on his spectacles and mounting, by means of a ladder, upon the pedestal of the said Horse, called out, after an attentive glance—

“Per Sant’ Gennaro ! it is true. Gli hanno cavato gli occhi !” (they have taken out his eyes !)

He then related to the astonished Principe that he had just been sent for to attend the death-bed of the confessor of the former proprietor of the palace, Prince di S. Silvestro, and had received from him a most curious

confession in writing. After expressing sorrow for a deed of guilt he had committed, the dying man narrated, that the late Prince had many years ago confided to him that he had formed the resolution, in fulfilment of a vow he had made, to place two brilliants, of immense size and value, as eyes in the head of his Bronze Horse.

By the confessor's assistance this was accomplished, and the latter added that he strongly suspected the reason of the Prince's doing so extraordinary a deed proceeded from a remnant of the superstitious veneration for horses which had secretly been cherished in Naples long after the inhabitants were converted to Christianity. But if such was the case, the Prince never confessed it.

Years rolled on, and the transaction continued a profound secret. The Principe was a strange and eccentric person (as has been already mentioned), considered half crazy by every one, who passed his days and nights in poring over ancient lore, and receiving no visitors, unless it was some one who brought

him manuscripts or legends of antiquity, for which he was always ready to give a good price.

A short time before his death, the confessor used frequently to meet at his house a little old man of foreign appearance, who, the reader may guess, was the purchaser of the Bronze Horse. He had travelled much, and evidently became soon in high favour with the Prince, whom he supplied with much of his favourite literature, and they used to be shut up for weeks together over their books.

On the death of the Principe (who had unwisely let his foreign friend into the secret of the diamond eyes), the confessor was tempted by the stranger with an offer of 10,000 ducats to allow him to take away the brilliants, he (the confessor) binding himself by a solemn oath never to reveal the transaction, which, implicated as he was by sharing in the profit, there was little fear of his violating.

The old man disappeared immediately after he had secured the rich prize, leaving his ac-

complice a prey to remorse which embittered all the enjoyment he had expected from this ill-gotten wealth, till, in his last moments, he sought to quiet his guilty conscience, as well as to escape some years of purgatory, by first bequeathing what remained of the sum to the Church, and then by making the above confession.

It may well be imagined what was the vexation of the Principe San Silvestro on receiving the foregoing communication from his friend the Abate.

To hear that he had been deprived of wealth, probably more than sufficient to put him upon an equality with the richest of the Neapolitan nobles, would have been a severe trial to any one, but the Prince had been so long accustomed to privations that he no longer felt disappointments so keenly as he did in his younger days, though, for his son's sake, he sometimes wished his fortune was larger.

"God has so ordered it," said he to himself with a sigh. "I am not destined to be fortunate. However, 3,500 ducats are better

than nothing, and will assist me in fitting out my boy when he leaves college."

In the mean time the Prince's son, the young Constantino Fiorillo, grew up the pride and joy of his fond father, who, by strict economy, had been enabled to give him an excellent education; and, gay, handsome, and accomplished, he was beloved by all his companions in the College of San Carlo Martello, who, being sons of the first *noblesse* in Naples, were much his superiors in fortune. But Constantino as yet felt not the difference of their positions. In college all were equal, and when, at the age of eighteen, they returned to their families, several of the young men with whom he had contracted a friendship continually invited him to visit them, and at length the Duca di Laurino, the father of his most favourite young friend (who, to his great sorrow, was carried suddenly off by an illness of a few days), procured for him the commission his son had had in the Guardia Corpo, or King's Body Guard, which was then, as it is now, considered the first regiment in Naples, and

only the sons of the nobility are allowed to enter it.

One evening, during a very gay carnival, the young Conte di Lesino called to carry the Principino to a ball at the Duc de Ste. Marguerite's, who was then French ambassador at the court of Naples, and on their way thither the Conte said gaily—

“Prepare to surrender your hitherto insensible heart to-night, Constantino. I am going to show you the prettiest girl that has appeared this winter—the beautiful Cecile de Montemar ; only you must not try to supplant me, as I fully intend doing her the honour of making her the Contessa di Lesino. My father has given his consent to the match. She is the only child and heiress of Mons. de Montemar, a Frenchman, whose wealth, report says, is immense.

The ball had already commenced, for it was late when the friends arrived, and the Conte hurried forward in search of the subject of their conversation, leaving Constantino standing near the door, quietly waiting for the conclusion of a dance. He then

moved on to speak to the Duchesse de Ste. Marguerite, with whom he was a great favourite, and both she and the Duc had always distinguished him by marked attention.

"You are not engaged yet, I hope, Principino?" said the Duchesse, as he approached her; and on receiving an answer in the negative, she added, "Tant mieux, I wish to present you to *la belle des belles*, ma chère Cecile de Montemar."

The introduction accordingly took place. Constantino gazed with undisguised admiration at his lovely partner, and led her to the dance, where they soon attracted all eyes, the Principino being the lady's equal in manly beauty, and both being perfect in the graceful exercise. Cecile found Constantino the most agreeable young man she had met since her arrival in Naples. She had already been prepossessed in his favour by her friend the Duchesse, but by some chance they had not become acquainted till this evening.

They were seated together after the qua-

drille was ended, and still engaged in an animated conversation, when, to Constantino's surprise, Mons. de Montemar hurried up to them, and, without deigning to notice the latter, he with mingled hauteur and rudeness placed his daughter in charge of the Duca di Lesino, who came to claim her hand for the next waltz. The ball had no further charms for Constantino, nor did Cecile appear pleased with her change of partners ; and her father evidently took special care that the Prince should have no opportunity of again addressing her.

During the remainder of the Carnival, however, they frequently met, through the kind management of the Duchesse de Ste. Marguerite, who had pleasure in observing the growing attachment of these two amiable young people ; and, as she had undertaken to be Cecile's chaperone (a distinction which flattered the vanity of De Montemar), she availed herself of the circumstance, not only to have her at all her parties, but very often to pass the morning, and accompany her to see various places of interest in the neighbour-

hood, where they were sure to be joined by the enamoured Principino, and a rosy blush or a bright smile from his innamorata sent him home happy for the rest of the day. Still he never ventured to express his love in words to the object of it, feeling that his want of fortune must be an insuperable bar to their union, even could he hope that Cecile herself might be inclined to favour his suit, as he could not be blind to the peculiar and determined aversion the old De Montemar showed for him on all occasions, and his open preference as well as the encouragement he gave to the attentions of the Duca di Lesino, in spite of his daughter's evident dislike to the latter.

The Carnival at length concluded, and after the expiration of a few weeks more, the Conte resolved to bring his fate to a crisis, and to make a formal offer of his hand to Mdle. de Montemar, having hitherto only opened his mind to her father on the subject, who always endeavoured to keep up his hopes, simply cautioning him not to be too precipitate in making his declaration. But

the impetuous Neapolitan would submit to no longer delay, and finding Cecile alone at his next visit, he at once urged his suit with great eagerness, but, at the same time, with the air of one assured of success. What was his surprise and mortification, then, when she firmly declined his proposals, adding that she was aware his addresses were encouraged by her father, and she feared her refusal would displease him much if he heard of it. "But why," continued she, "need he be made acquainted with it? Be generous, Monsieur le Comte, and let what has passed between us be buried in oblivion. I do not love you, therefore I cannot become your wife ; but I shall be the most grateful of your friends if you will grant my request, and conceal from my dear father that you have ever spoken to me on this subject."

The eyes of the Italian flashed fire as she concluded, and his countenance lowered ; but Cecile had turned her face from him while she spoke, afraid to witness the reception of her refusal. With a strong effort the Conte repressed the passionate language that

rose to his lips, and merely replying, "You shall be obeyed, Mademoiselle," he bowed profoundly and left the room.

Cecile, in the innocence of her heart, was overjoyed that he had received her refusal so calmly; and delighted to think that the affair was settled, and, as she hoped, without offending her father, she flew to her friend the Duchesse, to whom, with a radiant smile, she communicated the above particulars, adding, "How very happy I am that I shall never more be annoyed by his attentions!"

"And you really believe that the Conte will be satisfied to give you up so easily?" said the Duchesse. "Do not flatter yourself he will. However, I am glad you answered him so decidedly. But let us think no more of your rejected swain for the present; you must come with me and choose a dress for a grand masked ball, which is to be given by the Marchesa Sevirino, on the marriage of her son. It is expected to exceed all the Carnival *fêtes* in splendour, and I intend that my dear Cecile shall be its brightest ornament."

Cecile's choice was soon made. Anxious to attract as little attention as possible, she fixed upon the simple costume of a peasant of Provence ; and the Duchesse, preferring also to be attired as a Frenchwoman, decided to appear as the Duchesse de la Vallière.

Upon this gay occasion the kind Duchesse did not forget her young friend Constantino, whom she informed of the costumes chosen by herself and Cecile, when he immediately determined to go to the ball as a Provençal troubadour, to have an opportunity of lingering appropriately by his fair countrywoman's side. The company being all masked, the lovers had a better opportunity of conversing freely than they had for some time enjoyed, and never had any evening appeared so short to them, till at length Constantino, after singing to the guitar (in his character of troubadour) a canzonetta he had composed for Cecile, led her to a seat apart from the gay throng, and there he could no longer refrain from avowing the fervent love he had long cherished for her, although all he ven-

tured to hope was that she would forgive his presumption in doing so.

Poor Cecile was quite overcome by this declaration. Though her heart had long told her that she was beloved, and she felt that the love was mutual, still, so long as it remained unacknowledged on Constantino's part, she had not the courage to withdraw herself from the pleasure of his society; but his open avowal now, recalled to her remembrance her father's aversion to him and her forgotten duties. With mingled dignity and tenderness she thanked the Principino for his preference, frankly telling him that she knew her father would never consent to their union. She therefore entreated he would think of her no more, and, hastily rising to join the Duchesse de Ste. M., whom at that moment she saw coming in search of her, she left the ball, overpowered by conflicting emotions. Constantino almost immediately followed her example, and it seemed that this night was indeed destined to be one of severe trial to him, for scarcely had he retired to rest, when a servant came in great haste

to summon him to attend his father, who had been seized with a fit of apoplexy, and appeared at the point of death.

Constantino found him quite insensible, and, after a few short breathings, all was at rest. The grief of the young prince was violent and deep. Having had but one parent from his early infancy, all the warm and enthusiastic feelings of his heart had been concentrated in his love for his father, and, until he met with Cecile de Montemar, no other attachment had found a place there. He therefore sank almost into despair on finding himself alone in the world, without any natural connexion on whom he could rely ; and the affairs of the late prince were in such disorder, that there was scarcely a sufficient sum left to keep his son above actual want. The latter misfortune weighed but little upon Constantino in the present state of his mind, it only made him withdraw himself still more from the world. He could not bear to tax the generosity of the Duc de Ste. Marguerite, and many kind friends who would, he knew, have gladly

offered him assistance, and he often seriously contemplated shutting himself up in a monastery for life.

For a year after the death of his father he remained almost entirely secluded in his own palace, and his gay companions, finding they were constantly denied admittance to him, by degrees gave up the attempt, and the prince, who had so lately been the life of all their parties, soon faded from their memories, as if he had never existed. The only recreation in which he indulged was in taking long solitary rambles in the environs of Naples, and one of his favourite resorts was the lovely little Lago d'Agnano; he would linger for hours on the most retired side of it, carrying a fowling-piece in his hand, but rarely making any use of it. Reclined upon the grass, his thoughts would wander back to the happy days he had spent on his first entrance into life, and of the bright sunbeam that had crossed his path, in the vision of his Cecile; and often the shades of evening had long fallen ere he sought again his solitary home.

One night he had taken a longer walk than usual, having sauntered for several hours in the romantic woods of Astrone (the King's preserve), the ascent to which is by a winding road from one extremity of the lake, and the sun had been set for some time before he reached the broad path skirted by trees, which runs along the left side of the water. He had advanced but a little way in it when he overtook a lady and gentleman; the latter seemingly an invalid, and very feeble, was leaning heavily upon the arm of his companion, and Constantino started as he once more heard the voice of Mdlle. de Montemar, who said anxiously—

“Dear papa, I fear you have walked too far, you are fatigued; you will never be able to reach the carriage. Henri,” she added, to the servant who attended them, “go on, and bring it back to us, and we shall await you here.”

Constantino withdrew behind the trees, that he might not be observed by them, while Cecile seated her father upon the grass, and placed herself beside him. The servant

had not left them above a few minutes, when suddenly two men, who had been concealed behind a bank on the opposite side of the road, sprang out upon them. One of them seized the old De Montemar, and, gagging his mouth, was proceeding to tie his hands, when a shot from the gun of Constantino laid him prostrate on the earth.

The other man meanwhile had caught up the fainting Cecile in his arms, and carried her off with great rapidity across a field towards a hut at some distance ; but the moment the prince saw that his shot had taken effect, he flew to the rescue of his beloved, loudly calling upon the ravisher at his peril to stop and release the lady.

The former turned, and seeing the prince was unarmed, he laid the insensible Cecile on the ground, and, drawing his sword, rushed at once upon him ; but Constantino was prepared, and, pulling out a stiletto he always carried about with him, he struck it with all his force into his assailant's right arm, the pain of which obliged the latter to drop his sword and stagger back, when the prince

instantly possessed himself of it. The Conte de Lesino (for it was he), seeing the victory lost, fled with the greatest precipitation, and was soon out of sight. Constantino cared not to pursue him, all his anxiety was for Cecile, who by this time began to revive. He durst not leave her to call for assistance, but, to his inexpressible relief, he saw De Montemar's servant running towards them, by whose aid he conveyed Mdle. de Montemar to the place where they had left her father. She had now recovered consciousness, but was nearly relapsing again on finding that the dreadful shock had been too much for the enfeebled frame of her parent, who was so exhausted he could scarcely make any answer to their inquiries.

The carriage having now arrived, Constantino, at the earnest entreaty of Cecile, accepted a place in it to Naples. Little conversation passed during the drive ; Cecile's looks, more than words, spoke her gratitude, but her father engrossed all her attention, his faintness increasing so much that they

obliged often to stop, fearing he would
re before they could reach home with
in.

On arriving, at length, at De Montemar's palace in the Chiaja, Constantino only remained till he saw the invalid carried to his room; he then despatched a servant in all haste for a physician, and sent another to inform the Duc and Duchesse de St. Marguerite of the catastrophe; then, pressing the hand of the weeping Cecile, he took his leave, saying he should return early the next morning to inquire for them both.

It may be imagined that, after the agitating scenes he had been engaged in, sleep did not visit his eyes, and the earliest dawn of day found him again at De Montemar's door. The report the servants gave of the latter was very unfavourable; he continued to sink, and the physician declared it as his opinion that he would not outlive the day.

While Constantino and the latter were conversing together, Mdle. de Montemar's maid entered with a note, which she said her mistress had desired her to send instantly to

the Principe San Silvestro. Constantino tore it open, and read these words :—“ My dearest father earnestly desires to see you—lose no time, I beseech you, in coming to us.”

The Prince instantly followed the maid to the sick man’s chamber, at the door of which he was met by Cecile, who led him up to the bedside of the dying De Montemar.

The old man, feebly turning his eyes towards him, stretched out his hand, saying,

“ You have saved my child from worse than death, Monsieur, and there is but one reward worthy of you. I rejoice that my life has been spared long enough to do you justice. Take her,” said he, uniting his hand with that of Cecile, “ and may the blessing of an unfortunate and repentant man rest with you both !”

Then, turning to the Duchesse de St. Marguerite, he added, “ Retire, my dear friend, and take Cecile with you for a short time. I have some private instructions I wish to give the Prince, as my son, which it would only pain my darling child to hear.”

The ladies accordingly withdrew, when

De Montemar, addressing Constantino, said, "Will you swear solemnly that you never will make known to my beloved Cecile what I am going to reveal to you? It would only add to my other sufferings in these my last moments, the idea that she must despise her poor father's memory, and I humbly trust that my present repentance may be accepted by that God in whose presence I must so soon appear. May I then depend upon your secrecy?"

Constantino eagerly gave the desired promise, and De Montemar continued thus—

"In me, Prince, you behold the purchaser of your father's Bronze Horse. I know you are acquainted with all the circumstances of the transaction, from the confession of the old priest who was my accomplice in the guilty deed, so I need not repeat them to you; but open that cabinet and touch a spring you will see at the back, that I may give you a proof of my identity."

Constantino obeyed, and on opening a secret drawer, he beheld, to his amazement, the two small frames which had contained

the diamond eyes he had heard so much of, with the original eyes, which had been taken out to make room for them, and which the confessor had made over to De Montemar when they committed the robbery.

"Can you forgive me," said the expiring man, "for having so basely deceived your good father, and for having deprived you for so long a time of your just rights? Could I but give you an idea of the misery my guilty conscience has occasioned me these many years, you could not, at least, refuse me your compassion.

"My health has by degrees sunk under it, and it scarcely required the shock of last night to snap the slender cord asunder. When I met you last winter, my unhappiness was redoubled. I seemed to read in your eyes that you were informed of my guilt; and when I perceived your attachment to my daughter, I was haunted by the fear that you might disclose the secret to her, for which cause (more than for your want of fortune) I endeavoured to prevent her having any intercourse with you.

“My full intention was, as soon as I should have united her to the Conte di Lesina, and thus have secured for her the illustrious station in society I was ambitious of, to become a monk of one of the severest orders, in some distant province, and to spend the wretched remains of my existence in penitence and prayer.

“Cecile’s firm refusal to accept the Conte’s proposals disconcerted my plans, and at her earnest entreaty I at last consented to give him a formal dismissal. The consequence has been his rash attempt of last night.”

De Montemar here paused to recover breath, and Constantino hastened to assure him that in the father of his beloved Cecile all was forgiven, adding that his only desire was to gratify him in any other wish he might have.

“Bless you, my dear son,” said De Montemar, his eyes overflowing with tears. “I am undeserving of such goodness; but I have one last request to make, which, if not very repugnant to your feelings, I trust you will comply with. All my estates are in France,

to which country my daughter is most fondly attached. At Naples you have no tie, no property, no friends to interest you. Will you then become a Frenchman, take my name, and make your home in Provence? If you can agree to this you will make me die in peace, for—it may be a weakness—but I feel that if you remain in Naples, one day or other, by some chance, the degrading tale of my unworthy conduct may reach the ears of poor Cecile, and with her sensitive feelings, I am convinced she could not survive the knowledge.”

The old man’s voice here became inarticulate, and shortly after he expired in the arms of his daughter.

Constantino determined to respect his dying request, and upon his marriage with Cecile, they bade adieu to Naples and sailed for France, where they established their permanent home.

Constantino faithfully kept his promise, and his wife never had a suspicion of the fatal secret.

The Bronze Horse still stands in the court

of Palazzo Cavallo, where it may be seen by all curious inquirers. The legend respecting it is now probably almost forgotten, or treated as a fable, unless by those who are so fond of the marvellous as to give eager credence to all such ancient records.



JULIA ;

OR, THE NEAPOLITAN MARRIAGE.

“MY dear Julia, what is the matter with you ?” said Harriet Bellfield to her sister, a very lovely girl of seventeen, who one morning, with a heightened colour, came flying into the breakfast-room of the Gran’ Bretagna Hotel, in the Chiaja, at Naples, and hastily throwing off her shawl and untying her bonnet, she coolly thrust the latter under the breakfast-table, and seating herself, her sister had only time to exclaim, “Oh, Julia ! your pretty, new bonnet !” when the door opened, and Mr. Bellfield, their father, entered.

He started on seeing his youngest daughter, and said, “Why, Julia, here you are ! I could have sworn I saw you cross the



silent, and, when they do talk, they have so seldom anything agreeable to say. I yawn through the whole dance when I have one of them for a partner. It seems to me that if they can check one's spirits by some cold reply, they think they have done an eritorious action, and "——

"Heyday, Julia!" interrupted her father, "what am I to understand by all this? Have you already lost all regard for your own countrymen, because these Neapolitan block-heads have been persuading you you are a goddess? Take care what you are about. I will have no sentimental flirtations; they would only unfit you for becoming the steady, domestic wife of some good, honest Englishman, which I one day hope to see you. I need not warn you against ever allowing such an idea to enter your head as that you are in love with any Italian, from old King Ferdinando downwards. That I could not believe any daughter of mine capable of, as she knows such a crime would be unpardonable in my eyes, and that, if she disobeyed my commands, I should cast her off for ever.

And who ever found John Bellfield change his determination when once it was made? I only wish sincerely that poor Harriet's health had not brought us upon the continent, of which I am heartily weary. But, thank God! she seems to have benefited by the change; and next summer, I trust, we shall be again safe in old England, never more to leave it. But don't cry, Julia, like a foolish child," added he, seeing her tears begin to flow. "I am not angry; I am only putting you upon your guard. Come! cheer up, little one! here is a cheque for 200 ducats between Harriet and you. Harry will, I dare say, expend her share upon marbles and ancient pipkins, and you will require a handsome dress for the ambassador's ball, next week. Get what you will, only let it be of the best, that these ugly duchessas and marchesas may see that the English have both the taste and the money to dress themselves much more elegantly than *they* can."

Mr. Bellfield then applied himself to the newspaper and his breakfast; and the in-

valid, having soon finished hers, rose to go and lie down upon the sofa, when, to the indescribable dismay of Julia, Chiffon, the favourite little dog of Miss Bellfield, seeing his mistress move, came running from under the table to follow her, dragging by the strings the new pink satin bonnet of poor Julia, which she had unfortunately placed most invitingly within his reach, and the fashion of which he had done his utmost to change, by pulling it to pieces; so that it would now have been difficult to pronounce what piece of dress it had originally been intended for. Julia was too frightened to rise from her chair; but Harriet, seeing her confusion, and guessing the cause, with quiet presence of mind snatched the bonnet from Chiffon, and, throwing her handkerchief to him in exchange, she pushed the former under the cushions of the sofa upon which she was reclining, and had just accomplished doing so when Mr. Bellfield, looking up from "Galignani," and seeing the dog in the act of tearing the handkerchief, began a lecture to his eldest daughter for permitting her

favourite to commit such an enormity, adding, "You are privileged, Harry, because you are ill ; but I do hate pet dogs above everything : they are always in mischief."

So saying, he rose, and, having concluded his ample meal, he retired to write his English letters of business, leaving the sisters *tête-à-tête*.

"Well, Julia," said Miss Bellfield, as soon as the door closed upon their father, "you will now, I hope, explain to me the meaning of this strange scene, and why you have condemned the pretty bonnet you were so proud of yesterday to so cruel a death."

"I have no explanation to give, sister," said Julia, rather pettishly. "You always lecture me when I tell you anything. I was afraid papa would be cross if he knew I had been out alone ; so I hid my bonnet, and that tiresome little Chiffon has destroyed it, that is all."

"Never mind, dear Julia," said her sister, "Chiffon's mistress shall find you another bonnet : but was that really all ? Who was the companion of your walk ? Remember,

my own darling, that I stand in a mother's place to you, and you must have no concealments from me. You know you need not fear my betraying your confidence, but I may often give you useful advice, as I am so much older, and have so much more experience of the world than you have. You will not pain your poor sickly sister, will you, by refusing to make a friend of her?"

Julia's ill humour vanished in an instant at this affectionate appeal, and, throwing her arms round Miss Bellfield's neck, she said—

"Indeed, Harry, you are always suspecting mischief where there is none. Last night I asked the Marchese Landini if he could procure me the music of some pretty waltzes that were played, and he said he would bring me an answer to the Villa Reale this morning, if I could meet him there, as he had an appointment after breakfast, and should not be able to call; so I thought there could be no harm in going there for a few minutes, as I was really anxious to have the waltzes, which he has promised to send

me this evening. Now, Harry, have I done wrong?"

" You acted without thinking, as you too often do, dearest Julia ; you forgot, that to disobey a parent's orders must always be wrong ; but I am much more angry with this impertinent Neapolitan than I am with you. How dared he take such a liberty as to desire you to meet him ? he surely might have sent his servant with the message, or you were in no such violent hurry for these waltzes that you could not have waited till the evening. Let me entreat you, my dear girl, to be on your guard with these Italians ; they do not understand the innocence of an English girl, their own countrywomen are so very different, and they will immediately presume if you give them the slightest encouragement. They may be well enough to dance with, but surely, Julia, you would never think of them as anything more, and you know very well that if papa were to see a symptom of a flirtation, he would instantly hurry you away from Naples ; so let me once more advise you to keep out of scrapes, for after

this admonition I will not promise to protect you as I did the wreck of your bonnet just now. And now, here come my doctor and your singing master, and we must attend to our different avocations. If the day keeps fine, and I am allowed to drive out, we shall then go to Cardon's, to choose you another bonnet."

"Il Signore Dottore, ed il maestro di canto," said the servant, opening the door, and the sisters separated.

Mr. Bellfield, the father of these two young ladies, was an eminent London merchant; he was the son of a gentleman of good family in Devonshire, but, being a younger brother, he had, by his own choice, been brought up to the mercantile profession, to which from early youth he had devoted himself with the most determined assiduity and perseverance, and his good and steady conduct so gained the esteem of the merchant in whose house he had been placed, that, finding, when young Bellfield had attained the age of twenty-five, his only daughter was attached to him, he, to the surprise of all his

friends and acquaintances (who imagined he would expect some great alliance for his beautiful heiress), at once consented to bestow her upon him, taking him at the same time as his partner. Contrary to the expectation of many, the measure turned out an excellent one. Mr. Bellfield was not in the least spoilt by the brilliant change in his circumstances; he continued the same attentive, prudent character he had ever been, looking up to his father-in-law as his oracle, and making a most affectionate husband and parent.

Mrs. Bellfield, from having been a beauty and an only child, was at first rather inclined to have her own way, and to lead a gayer life than either her father or husband approved; but as she was sincerely attached to both, and she saw they were quietly determined she should not be indulged on this point further than they judged right, she very sensibly yielded, and by degrees she became so fond of a domestic life, that when her father died, some years after her marriage, and the immense fortune Mr. Bellfield

succeeded to would have enabled them to dash away in the first style, she was the first to propose that they should purchase a country seat, where they might pass the whole of the year, except when business, in which Mr. Bellfield still kept a share, required their presence in town. The education of their two daughters (several sons born between these having died in infancy) now entirely occupied Mrs. Bellfield ; she would yield the task to no governess, being extremely accomplished herself, and she continued to instruct them with the greatest care till Harriet had attained the age of fifteen and Julia that of ten, when having caught cold, which she unfortunately neglected, an inflammatory fever in a few days carried her to the grave, at the moment her life was of the most essential importance to her girls. Mr. Bellfield sincerely deplored the loss of his amiable wife, and after his first deep sorrow was past, he found his country residence so melancholy without her, that he took up his abode entirely in London, where he placed his daughters at a fashion-

able boarding-school, from which after two years he removed the eldest, leaving the little Julia to complete her education there, to avoid (as he said) the being bored with a governess in his own house.

Miss Bellfield, who from a child was particularly quiet and retiring, disliked the bustle of a town life, and was soon weary of its gaieties. She ardently longed for the time when she should have her young sister as her companion, and at her earnest request Julia was taken from school six months before the present period, when it was settled that the following spring she should make her *début* in the gay world; but unfortunately Harriet, who had always been delicate, and whose constitution was unequal to the fatigue of late hours and heated rooms, became so seriously unwell in the autumn, that the physicians, fearing her lungs were affected, strongly recommended her passing the following winter in a warm climate. Mr. Bellfield, much alarmed, hastily broke up his establishment, and performing the long journey slowly, on account of the invalid, it

was the month of November ere they reached Naples, where they had been settled for three months at the time my history commences.

The Marchese Landini (the Neapolitan alluded to in the conversation between the two sisters) was of a very ancient family, and was nominally possessed of a tolerable fortune—that is to say, he inherited the family estates in Calabria, which were of considerable extent; and if he had had money sufficient to cultivate the lands and put them in order after the death of his father, who had been very extravagant, they might have brought him a respectable income, but he had the misfortune to be an only child and to have been spoilt from his infancy.

Being very handsome, with showy abilities, his parents considered him a paragon of perfection. Indulged in every whim, he only studied when the fancy seized him, and a few accomplishments were all he made any progress in.

He had the art, however, to make the

most of these, and though, in reality, he was deceitful, dissipated, and ill-tempered, so great was the command he had over himself that in the world of Naples he was universally believed frank and good-humoured ; and if, occasionally, some of his irregularities came to light, he seemed so candid in owning his fault, and sincere in expressing his sorrow for it, that he got out of numerous scrapes far better than he deserved, and in the gay circles he was a universal favourite.

For music he had an uncommon talent ; he was a first-rate *valseur*, and having been in Sicily when King Ferdinand fled there during the short reign of Murat and the island was occupied by English troops, he had an opportunity of acquiring the language and making himself, as usual, agreeable. He was allowed to mix much in the society of our compatriots, and this, when politics changed and the royal family was reinstated at Naples, was the means of introducing him to most of the English who now again began to flock thither ; and, among others, to the family of Mr. Bellfield, to whom he procured

a letter of recommendation from one of their particular friends, which induced Mr. B. to invite him to his house, notwithstanding his prejudice against Italians ; and although, except from Julia, the Marchese did not meet with the admiration he expected, he was so polite to all the party they could find no fault with him, and he continued to walk in every morning and evening at the Gran' Bretagna, and also to meet the Bellfields in the Villa Reale and at the theatre, and to be always the partner of Julia at all public places, without exciting a suspicion in her father's mind of the possibility of her becoming attached to him, as he supposed the warning he had given her would be a sufficient safeguard to her from any such folly.

Harriet Bellfield felt less sure of this, but her health so rarely permitted her to accompany Julia to gay parties, or even to be in the drawing-room of an evening, that she was not aware how rapidly the affair was progressing ; and as Julia avoided ever naming the Marchese, she thought it best to be

silent also, trusting that if any impression had been made upon her sister's young heart by this frivolous Neapolitan, absence would soon obliterate it, as the time of their departure from Naples was now not very far distant.

There was one of Julia's admirers whom Harriet was strongly inclined to favour—he had so many excellent qualities, and so much steadiness and religious principle; he was, of all the young men she knew, the one to whom she would the most willingly have intrusted her sister's happiness. He was very handsome, agreeable, and well-informed, and she felt quite sure of her father's approval, and hoped that, in time, he might be a successful suitor, for Julia always spoke highly of him.

But, alas ! such is the waywardness of woman's fancy, the latter is too often attracted by what the cooler judgment cannot approve. And so it was with our heroine. She esteemed Mordaunt, and liked his society when she was neither in exuberant spirits nor inclined to be sentimental ; but the Nea-

politan had succeeded in captivating her heart.

Miss Bellfield, to whom Mordaunt had confided his love for her sister, gave him all the encouragement she could to persevere, but she advised his saying nothing to her father until he had assured himself that his affection was returned by Julia, and an opportunity very shortly occurred of his ascertaining the state of the latter's feelings towards him.

The Marchese, who was most indefatigable in his endeavours to amuse and please his *innamorata*, one day proposed to her that they should make a pic-nic party to Caserta, adding that he would procure permission to drive through the royal park, by which they might proceed to San' Silvestro (a hunting lodge of the King's) to breakfast, and that there, also, he should get an order to admit them, and, after having explored all the beauties of that lovely spot, they could return to the park and have their dinner in the *giardino Inglese* (English garden).

The proposal was eagerly embraced by

Julia, and the Marchese, with his usual tact, prevailed upon Mr. Bellfield to agree to the plan by promising to show him the King's English cows and dairy at San' Silvestro, and the idea of dining in anything resembling an English garden had great charms for him ; so invitations were speedily sent to some of their most agreeable friends, the Marchese taking care to have an aunt of his own included (the Duchessa di Merola, with whom Julia was already acquainted), and it was settled that all the party were to assemble at the Gran' Bretagna on the appointed morning, which proved one of the most lovely of Neapolitan April days.

Every one was punctual to the moment—a rare occurrence in a party of pleasure—and all were ready to start by seven o'clock a.m. Julia, however, who had been in an ecstasy all the morning, was terribly disappointed, when they were about to set off, to hear her father, instead of inviting the Marchese to make the fourth in their carriage, desire Mordaunt to get in, coolly saying to the former—

“ Marquis ” (he always Anglicised his title), “ you will be more amused among your own countryfolks than with us ; pray take the lead with them, as you are the director of our sports to-day, and we shall follow you.”

The Marchese looked very crestfallen, and poor Julia could scarcely restrain her tears, but before they reached the end of the Strada di Chiaja the lovers had consoled themselves by the determination to be inseparable for the day, as soon as they should leave their carriages ; and Julia’s good humour returning, she was quite disposed to be amiable with Mordaunt, and listen complacently to his conversation, which had never been so lively and agreeable as on this morning, his spirits being elevated by having an opportunity of engrossing her attention during the long drive, and also by the hope that, ere the day closed, he might, by some fortunate chance, be enabled to explain his sentiments to her.

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When the party had proceeded halfway up this hill, they were obliged to leave the carriages and perform the rest of the ascent on foot. A small path here turns off still further to the left, and leads round a corner, through a pretty shrubbery, to the entrance of a most lovely dell, the sides of which are clothed with fresh green grass, ornamented by splendid old trees. On the top of the bank, on one side, is built a large sort of enclosure for sheep, which is covered with a thatched roof *à l'Anglaise*, and, on the other, the path leads you along the bottom of a sloping green lawn, smooth as velvet (where the king's cows are feeding), to the casino of San' Silvestro.

On entering the dell, all the party exclaimed, "How English ! how very delightful !" and no one was more enthusiastic than Julia, who, ever the creature of the moment, was charmed with all ; and, having run herself out of breath with scrambling up to the sheep-fold, that nothing might escape her inspection, she seated herself on the grass, and, looking down upon the dell below, she

turned to Mordaunt, who was the only one of the gay group who had kept pace with her, exclaiming, "How enchanting this is! I could live here for ever! Could not you?"

"With Julia for my companion, I should be only too happy to do so," replied Mordaunt, eagerly seizing the opportunity he had so long desired. "But we need not come to Italy for scenery of which this is but a poor imitation. I have a home in our native land, with dells and woods far more beautiful than these, which wants but the presence of a Julia to render it perfection. Say, dearest, may I hope that you will make me the most enviable of mortals, by consenting to share it with me?"

Julia blushed deeply at this unexpected address; for, occupied as she had been with another, and being utterly devoid of vanity, she was not at all aware of the deep impression she had made upon Mordaunt. But her colour soon faded away: she became deadly pale, and, withdrawing her hand, which he had taken, she rose hastily, saying, with a forced smile—

“ You think a love scene is *à propos* here, that we may have the *romanesque* as well as the *pittoresque* to admire ; but I hate romancing, so pray let us hasten to join the breakfast-party, who must think we are lost.”

“ Good heavens, Julia !” said Mordaunt, following her, “ you cannot really think I am in jest ? Is it possible that my ardent love and devotion have entirely escaped your observation ? Am I so totally indifferent to you ?”

“ How sorry I am you have ever spoken to me in this way,” said Julia, all the vivacity of her countenance disappearing. “ Surely I have not unconsciously misled you ; but I cannot do so a moment longer. You are so good, you merit my entire confidence. I have no heart to give you, Mr. Mordaunt ; my affections are already bestowed. God knows what my fate may be ; but pray believe that my feelings of gratitude to you, for your preference of so silly a girl as myself, will ever be boundless. I grieve for your disappointment, but, indeed, I am not

worthy of being your wife. I am not fit to live in England now ; all my tastes and feelings seem centred in this country, and"—

"Alas ! alas ! and is it possible ?" interrupted Mordaunt. "Can one short winter spent at Naples have totally obliterated all recollection and attachment to your own country ? and have you indeed been deluded into bestowing your innocent heart upon a wretched puppy of an Italian, who is incapable of appreciating its value ? Julia—Miss Bellfield—I beseech you, for your own sake, weigh well what you are about to do. Think not I speak from selfish motives ; God knows how willingly I would sacrifice my peace to ensure your felicity ; but, before you take any rash step, inform yourself more of the character of the Marchese Landini, who, I no longer doubt, is the favoured object of your love ; and, above all, consider well whether the life you must lead with a Neapolitan will really make you happy. Oh, no ! it is impossible that your pure and delicate mind can ever assimilate with theirs. And your good old father, your

JULIA ; OR,

excellent sister, what will be their grief when they hear what you have told me?"

"I entreat—I beg," said Julia, in the greatest agitation, "that you will not breathe a word of what has passed to my father. I shall tell him all myself when I can summon courage."

These last words brought them to the casino, where the Marchese darted forward to receive Julia, whom he led to her place at the table, which was laid out in a small *salon* on one side of the court. It was some time ere she could regain her composure; but anxiety to prevent her father and sister from suspecting what had occurred, enabled her to make a strong effort to overcome her feelings; and, by the time breakfast was concluded, she had tolerably succeeded. Not so Mordaunt. His deep depression was too evident to Harriet, and she much feared that the explanation between him and Julia had not turned out as she desired; but he gave her no opportunity of questioning him, as he took Mr. Bellfield's arm, and the whole party set off to walk round the hill

to admire, on one side, the extensive view of the rich plain of Caserta, and, on the other, the lofty ranges of the Apennines, extending as far as the Abruzzi. All beauty of scenery was now, however, lost upon poor Mordaunt. Mechanically he replied to the remarks of old Bellfield, who, fortunately, not being a quick observer, did not perceive his abstraction ; and never did he long so much for anything as that the day from which he had hoped so much should come to a conclusion.

Julia was now entirely engrossed by her lover. He had taken the precaution to make his aunt join them in the first part of their walk. But by degrees the latter separated herself from them, and when they re-entered the dell, the Marchese managed to detain Julia behind the rest, to say a few private words. "Why are you so *triste*, *ma belle*?" said he. "What has that solemn-looking *Inglese* been saying, which appears to have thrown such a *sirocco* over you? I shall be jealous, *mon ange*, if you give him so much of your attention."

“You have little cause for such a feeling in regard to Mr. Mordaunt,” said Julia, sadly. “I have made him very miserable this morning, by refusing, for your sake, what my father, sister, and all my friends would have considered a most eligible match for me.”

“I hope and trust,” hastily interrupted the Marchese, “that you did not confide our secret to him, Julia. Cielo ! if you did, he will have told all ere this to your father, and there will be an end of the affair.”

Julia started on beholding his infuriated looks, and replied indignantly, “Mordaunt is the soul of honour, Marchese. He gave me his promise to be silent, and I can rely upon that as implicitly as if it had been the oath of another. I repeat, that I grieve very much to have given him pain ; and, although my feelings towards you can never change, I am very unhappy when I think of the deception I am practising upon my dear papa and my kind, affectionate Harriet : my conscience tells me we are wrong. I wish you would give me back my promise, and

let us trust that after a time we may obtain papa's consent. If he finds that I will not marry any one else, I think he will at last yield ; and I shall write to you whenever I can effect a change in his sentiments."

"Never, never, Julia, can I consent to such a sacrifice," answered her lover, with vehemence. "To allow you to leave Naples under such circumstances would be to lose you for ever !" Then perceiving that his violence frightened her, he suddenly changed his tone, and throwing the most mournful expression into his fine black eyes, he added deprecatingly, "But forgive me, fairest and best, for having for one moment appeared to dispute your wishes. I have no will but yours, and, cost me what it may, by them shall I ever be guided. At present let us change the subject, as it agitates you so much, and join my aunt, who, I see, is waiting for us. We shall have better opportunities of discussing the matter some other time. Let us talk of this place : I knew you would admire it. You see how English my taste is." And, turning to the Duchessa,

who just then came up, he said, " You always say I am more than half an Inglese; zia mia (my aunt); do you not?"

" Indeed I do," replied the lady; " and now that I have had the good fortune to be acquainted with this little incantatrice (enchanted), I do not wonder at your preference of her nation."

" Have you any scenery like this near your palace in Calabria?" inquired Julia, anxious to avoid the compliments with which the Duchessa always overpowered her.

" Moltissimo" (a great deal), answered the Marchese. " I quite long to show you our mountains, and woods, and verdant plains; you will fancy yourself once more in Devonshire," casting, as he spoke, a side glance at his aunt, who returned his ironical smile significantly.

" You intend having English cows brought from Sicily to feed upon your plains; do you not?" again continued Julia.

" Certainement, ma chère," replied the Marchese, adding in a low voice, as he pressed the little hand that rested on his arm,

“Quand vous y serez la maîtresse, nous arrangerons tout cela après votre goût. But here are the carriages, and we must not make papa Bellfield wait.”

“I thought you would never come, Julia,” said the latter, impatiently, as Mordaunt silently handed her in.

“It was my aunt’s fault,” said the ready Marchese; “she would linger to botanise, and Miss Julia was so kind as to stay for her.”

The party then drove to the giardino Inglese, where they found dinner laid out in the most picturesque spot. Mr. Bellfield was soon quite in good humour, under the combined influence of the charms of the scenery and an excellent repast. Miss Bellfield, who was quite an artist, was equally delighted, and all but Julia and Mordaunt were in excellent spirits. Our heroine, however, by degrees caught the infection from her companions, and they spent the afternoon in exploring the beauties of the Bosco Vecchio, &c., until the carriages came to carry them back to Naples,

which they reached without accident at a late hour.

"I do not understand Mordaunt," said Mr. Bellfield to his eldest daughter, as they sat over a late breakfast on the following morning, Julia not yet having made her appearance. "Why does he not propose for your sister? There is no doubt of his attachment to her; that is evident enough, and all the world talks of it. Why, then, does he not come forward? But no one shall make game of a daughter of mine with impunity, and this very day I shall know what his intentions are."

"Do nothing hastily, pray, papa," said Harriet. "You are too proud, I am sure, to solicit any man to marry your child. Will you allow me to talk to Mordaunt, and, without putting the question direct, I think I shall be able to find out all you want to know."

"Very well, Harry," said her father, "I shall leave the affair in your hands. You are no fool, and I can depend upon you; but do not lose time. Our stay here cannot

now exceed a month, and I am particularly anxious to ascertain this point before our departure."

Julia just then coming in, no more was said on the subject; and that same morning Miss Bellfield had the opportunity she sought, as Mordaunt called almost immediately after breakfast, and found her alone in the drawing-room.

"You look as if you still had a head-ache," said she kindly to him when he entered.

"If you had said the *heart-ache*, dear Miss Bellfield, you would describe my malady more accurately," replied he. "I am truly wretched. I promised Julia that I would repeat nothing of what passed between us yesterday to your father; but as she did not name you, therefore, I do not consider myself bound to conceal from you that she has refused me, and that her affections are thrown away upon that fop the Marchese Landini! I hope my love does not render me unjust, but I very much doubt that man's being as amiable as he tries to make himself appear; and to think of

Julia as the wife of a Neapolitan, is distraction!"

"You must be mistaken, indeed you must!" said Harriet, in strong emotion. "She cannot be really attached to him. Have patience with her, dear Mr. Mordaunt, if you really love her so ardently. Remember how very young she is; give her but time to become better acquainted with you, and I feel persuaded she will not be insensible to your merits."

"I feel deeply all your kindness, my dear Miss Bellfield," answered he, "but I know it would be vain for me to await, here, at least, for any such improbable change in Julia's ideas. I leave Naples to-morrow for England. Tell Mr. Bellfield that urgent business recalls me; and will you also say (as he must have observed my attachment) that, when you all return to Devonshire, I hope to pay him an early visit, and to speak to him on the subject nearest my heart? Meanwhile I leave my happiness in your hands. Dear, kind Harriet, watch over your lovely sister, and, if possible, prevent her from forming so

miserable a union as one with an Italian must prove; and if at last her eyes are opened, and she can conquer her present infatuation, I shall be content to wait days, and months, and years for the most distant hope of ever calling her mine."

"Will you not, at least, say farewell to my father?" said the gentle Harriet, much affected.

"I cannot, indeed," hastily answered Mordaunt. "Say everything kind for me, both to him and to Julia. May God bless you all, and may your health be perfectly restored!"

So saying, he rushed from the room, leaving Miss Bellfield overwhelmed with sorrow, disappointment, and anxiety.

It was a difficult task for her to explain Mordaunt's conduct in a satisfactory manner to Mr. Bellfield without compromising Julia; but upon assuring him that she had long known of Mordaunt's love for her sister by his own confession, and that timidity and the seeing her so surrounded by admirers had alone prevented him from declaring himself,

Mr. Bellfield was satisfied, and agreed with Harriet that it was better to say nothing to Julia till they returned to England, when Mordaunt would have an opportunity of pleading his own cause.

Harriet found it a still more arduous business to sound her sister on the subject of the Marchese, as she was unwilling to betray the confidence of Mordaunt, especially as Julia evidently became daily more reserved with her, and studiously avoided naming her lover ; so that Miss Bellfield found it quite impossible to begin asking her any questions. She therefore silently contented herself with being as much with her sister as she could, and, to her great satisfaction, she observed that the Marchese's visits became less frequent, and the gaiety of the season being now all over, they had no opportunity of meeting at public places.

But the plot against the happiness of the unconscious Julia had long been deeply and determinately laid by the designing Neapolitan. As to any feeling of real love or affection, of that so selfish and dissipated a man

was incapable, although he could not but admire so lovely a girl, and feel flattered by her innocent admiration and attachment to himself; but he never for a moment would have dreamt of marrying her, had he not been attracted by the large fortune he was informed her father could give her, the possession of which would enable him to gratify his expensive and dissipated habits. He had therefore for some time been exerting all his eloquence to persuade Julia to consent to a private marriage, well knowing that if he applied openly to old Bellfield, a flat refusal would be his answer; but perceiving that she was the idolised favourite of her father, he felt secure that he was running no risk by inducing her to make a runaway match, and trusting that in a little time Mr. Bellfield's great affection for his daughter, along with the good offices of Harriet, would restore her to favour. And, in the meanwhile, he appeared the disinterested lover, as he offered to marry her without any settlement or certainty of receiving any *dote* whatever with his bride. Some twenty-five years ago it was not a very

difficult affair to obtain dispensations for marriage between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and the Marchese, having powerful friends at Rome, soon secretly procured one.

When the time of the Bellfields' departure drew near, and they decided upon paying a visit to Palermo, he proposed to Julia that they should make their escape from thence on board the packet to Malta, where they could be married both by a Protestant clergyman and by the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, and then they could write for pardon to Mr. Bellfield, and await his reply. Many were the arguments used by the Marchese, and it was long ere he succeeded in prevailing upon Julia to agree to this plan. He had a powerful assistant in his aunt (the Duchessa di Merola) who, being the wife of a Palermitan noble, offered to aid Julia in getting away, by inviting her to spend a few days with her at her villa, a few miles from Palermo, and also to accompany her to Malta as her chaperone.

This last offer was perhaps the most successful one in gaining poor Julia over, as she felt

that the protection of a female friend would be such a comfort to her. She had an English maid who had lived with her from her infancy, and to whom she was so fondly attached, Mr. Bellfield had consented to allow her to accompany her young lady to the school, where (as before narrated) she had passed her life from the period of her mother's death till a short time previous to her leaving England with her father and sister for Italy. Julia could open her heart more freely to this good woman than even to Harriet, because she knew that Merlin doted upon her to such a degree, that, although she always gave her excellent advice, she never could summon courage to refuse any earnest request her young mistress made to her. Julia had, therefore, from the first confided the secret of her attachment to Mrs. Merlin, and at length she ended by entreating she would become the companion of her flight. The poor abigail was quite thunderstruck at such a proposal, and exhausted every argument her imagination could suggest to dissuade her beloved lady

from taking so desperate a step ; but neither her prayers nor tears could prevail. Julia assured her solemnly that, if she refused to go with her, she would be the cause of her death, as she felt it would break her heart, which so terrified the simple and affectionate Merlin, she at last gave a reluctant consent ; and, as Miss Bellfield had also brought her maid abroad with her, Julia had no scruple on her sister's account in carrying off her own *femme-de-chambre* with her.

It was settled between the Marchese and our heroine that the former should set off for Malta a week before the Bellfields left Naples for Sicily, under pretence of going to Calabria, to look after his property, as this would prevent any suspicion, and he would be ready to receive the Duchessa and his intended bride when they should arrive.

Nothing could be greater than the satisfaction with which Harriet Bellfield bade him adieu, as she hoped, for ever. He conducted himself during the interview with his usual *sang froid*, but Julia's agitation was so evident that Harriet was glad to

plead indisposition and hurry from the room, carrying her sister along with her, to prevent her emotion being observed either by her father or the Marchese.

After the departure of the latter, Julia's spirits seemed entirely to fail her. She seldom spoke, and Harriet frequently found her in tears. Even Mr. Bellfield remarked how pale and thin she was become, and anxiously longed for the day they were to set off for Palermo, hoping a change of air might do her good; while Miss Bellfield trusted that, by amusing her mind, she would by degrees lose all recollection of her Neapolitan admirer.

They accomplished their voyage in safety, and Harriet felt she breathed more freely as she got to a greater distance from Naples. Her only annoyance was to find the Duchessa di Merola arrived at Palermo before them. However, during the first week they saw very little of her, till at last one morning she came into the room where Miss Bellfield was sitting alone (Julia, as had been agreed between the Duchessa and her, be-

ing absent), and inquiring anxiously for her sister, she expressed great regret at seeing her look so ill, adding, "I wish you would allow her to come and spend a few days with me at my villa ; the country air will be of use to her, and it will also do her good to be obliged to exert herself in company without you to assist her. Elle souffre cette petite de ce que vous autres Anglais appelez ' Les Diables Bleus,' continued she. Sometimes our sirocco brings that malady ; but send her to me, and I hope to restore her to you as gay and blooming as ever."

Miss Bellfield had always disliked the Duchessa, whose manner was too Italian to please her, and she could not bear the idea of confiding Julia to her, even for a day, but she looked so frank and good-humoured on the present occasion, and so much interested about her sister, that Harriet thought she would be wrong to refuse her kindness on account of her prejudice against the aunt of the Marchese Landini. She therefore thanked the Duchessa, saying she would talk to her father and Julia on the subject, and let her

know the result. Julia blushed deeply when her sister made the proposal to her, and seemed at first to decline it; but Mr. Bellfield, who fondly doated upon this darling child, was beginning to feel quite alarmed at the alteration in her appearance, and joined Harriet in urging her to accept the invitation.

"It will be but for a few days, love," said he, "and will recruit you for returning to Naples. We have a long journey afterwards, and I must not have two invalids to nurse; so pray get ready by the afternoon, when the Duchessa said she should return, in the hope of carrying you home with her."

Julia made no further objection. Her maid had been secretly employed for a week in conveying her mistress's clothes, and the few valuables she possessed, by small packets at a time, to the Duchessa's villa, and the remainder was to be concealed in that lady's carriage.

Poor Julia was quite overcome when the latter arrived, and her agony of distress at parting with her father and sister was so

great that Harriet repented she had ever consented to her leaving them. Still, as she believed Julia to be merely suffering from an affection of the nerves, she tried to hope that they had acted for the best. Mr. Bellfield and she were to go the following day to the Baths of Terme, about twenty miles distant from Palermo; but they promised to return for Julia by the end of a week, and the latter, once more embracing the affectionate relatives she was about to deceive so cruelly, suffered the Duchessa to lead her to the carriage.

This woman, who possessed a great deal of her nephew's tact and knowledge of human nature, did not attempt for some time to check Julia's grief; she merely soothed her by kind expressions, such as—

“*La pauvre petite ! C'est si naturel, elle est si affectionnée. Mais enfin, ma chère,*” said she at length, “what great sin are you going to commit? You are going to unite yourself to an adoring lover, whose only fault is that he was not born one of your compatriots; and your papa would have

you marry that dull Mordaunt, whom you hate ; which, had you remained with father and sister, you would, in spite of all your repugnance, have soon been persuaded to do. Then to think of the misery to which you would have condemned poor Girolamo, whose very existence depends upon you. You are assured that he will not separate you from your family. Mr. Bellfield has only to say the word and he will live entirely in England, and, at all events, he has promised to take you every summer to visit them there. Indeed, Julia carissima, you are a little ingrate to be so reluctant to make my nephew happy. How few of your Englishmen would have been so eager to conclude so purely disinterested a marriage. No, they must have all their *avocati* (lawyers), and their *cartes* (settlements) regularly drawn up, and everything strictly tied up in their favour ; but Girolamo loves only Julia, all else is as nothing to him ; and see," continued she, producing a letter which she had reserved as her last and surest consolation, "here is a biglietto from himself, which I have

not had an opportunity of giving to you before."

Julia eagerly tore it open. It was to announce his safe arrival at Malta, where he had arranged everything for their marriage, and every line breathed so much love, anxiety, and gratitude to her for the sacrifice she was about to make for him, that all her romantic feelings returned with redoubled ardour, and, drying her tears and embracing the Duchessa, she entreated her to forgive her weakness, and promised that she should see no more of it.

The apology was accepted with great apparent affection, and her friend was determined to leave her as little time as possible for thought.

The packet was to sail that evening for Malta, and in the intervening hours she contrived to keep her mind constantly occupied ; first, by carrying her all over the garden and grounds of her villa, and then by seeing her maid arrange her wardrobe for the voyage.

It was a lovely evening when, embarking

in a small boat, the two ladies, with Merlin, sailed to Palermo to join the packet at the moment of its weighing anchor, being afraid of being seen had they again driven through the town.

They were immediately taken on board, and a favourable breeze springing up, they soon lost sight of Sicily, and two days after the Rock of Malta appeared in view.

I need not attempt to describe the pretended raptures of the Marchese on again meeting Julia. To her who never doubted their sincerity they were most gratifying, and had the effect of raising her spirits and enabling her to go through the marriage ceremony (which took place the morning after her arrival) with tolerable composure. The only persons present were the Duchessa di Merola, Merlin, and a friend of the Marchese's, who had lent the *sposi* his country house, at a short distance from Valetta, for the time they might remain at Malta.

The day after her marriage Julia wrote the most affectionate letters to her father and sister entreating for pardon, to which her

husband added the most humble and submissive expressions on his part.

These letters they despatched by the return of the packet to Palermo, and both feeling more at ease now that the irrevocable knot was tied, and flattering themselves that Mr. Bellfield's anger would not long continue, they awaited his answer, which Julia, at least, scarcely allowed herself to doubt would be favourable to her wishes.

But no words can convey an idea of the grief and rage of the bereaved father, and the anguish of Harriet, when, upon their return to Palermo, they found that Julia was gone. So terrible was the indignation of Mr. Bellfield against the man who had robbed him of his favourite child, he seemed for some time to be almost bereft of reason, and Miss Bellfield, ill as she was, felt it necessary to stifle her own sorrow, to endeavour to console him; but by degrees his agitation subsided into a sort of stern despair, and when Harriet would have pleaded for her sister, he commanded her to be silent in so decided a tone, she durst not venture to proceed.

“Name not the wife of a Neapolitan to me, Harry, as my daughter; never will I see or acknowledge her as such, nor shall she, or the husband she has chosen to disgrace herself by marrying, ever inherit a shilling of mine. I do her no wrong, my warning was clear and distinct, as you very well know, and yet the ungrateful girl, whom I loved more than my life, and never contradicted, has had the utter want of feeling to leave her father and sister ‘for this infamous Italian.’ ”

Here tears interrupted the agonised parent, but he did not long give way to his feelings, and, a few hours after, when he again joined his daughter, he was to all outward appearance quite calm, and though his lips quivered, he said composedly to Harriet—

“We shall leave this place to-morrow, Harry, and I have only a few more words to say on the subject of your sister. You must give me your solemn promise that from this moment you will not correspond or hold any communication with her. Should I ever discover that you have disobeyed me, I shall

cast you off as I have done her, but I feel that I can depend upon you, for you have never deceived me."

"My dear, dear father," replied the weeping Harriet, "my heart seems ready to break between you, but you need not doubt my obedience ; I can only pray that the Almighty will enable us to bear this heavy trial with Christian resignation, and that time may soften your wrath towards our poor deluded Julia."

The following morning the unhappy father and daughter left Palermo, and returned to Naples, whither, in a few days, the letters of the Marchese and Julia followed them.

Mr. Bellfield, who expected them, was on the watch, to prevent their being given to Harriet, and instantly sending them to his banker, he desired him to enclose them in a blank cover, and return them to Malta by the first packet. He then told Miss Bellfield he had nothing more to wait for, and two days after they commenced their journey to England. It may be imagined what the affectionate Harriet felt on leaving the sister she

so fondly loved in a foreign land, without one word of adieu ; but her promise to her father she held sacred, and the only thing she thought she might venture to do without failing in the latter, was to write a few lines to Merlin, who it was a ray of comfort to her to know was with Julia, being assured she would attend her, sick or well, with a mother's care.

Miss Bellfield accordingly wrote a short note to this good woman, recommending her sister to her in the strongest terms, and beseeching her never to abandon her young mistress, whatever her lot might be. She added, that she dared not, after her father's prohibition, send any message to Julia, and desired Merlin never to let her know she had heard from her ; concluding by enclosing an order for a hundred pounds upon their banker in Naples, which she said was from her own allowance, and therefore she might dispose of it as she pleased, but desiring Merlin to reserve it for some great emergency (which she had a presentiment might ere long occur), and not to draw for the money until

such a crisis arrived ; then it was to be employed solely for Julia's use, never allowing the Marchese either to hear or get possession of it.

This letter she confided to their banker, whom she knew to be a very worthy man, and who seemed deeply touched by the family distress, and, informing him of its contents; she begged he would take a private opportunity of getting it conveyed to Merlin, who she thought it was very probable would be sent to his house to inquire if any letters had been left for her sister. This last act of affection arranged, poor Miss Bellfield, with a heavy heart, and suffering severely in body as well as mind, set off with her father on their journey northwards.

In the mean time the newly-married pair at Malta received the packet containing their unopened letters with very different feelings. Young and sanguine, and trusting that, as this was her first offence, her father's anger would give way on reading her humble entreaties for pardon, she had waited most impatiently to receive, as she hoped, a sum-

mons to join the party at Naples with her husband.

The Marchese, much more worldly and calculating, never expected that an immediate forgiveness would be granted them; he considered that a certain period must first elapse, and that Mr. Bellfield would not probably soften until he began to feel the loss of Julia's society; he was therefore less disappointed than his bride, who was quite overcome by this failure of all her fond expectations.

"Not one line from Harriet, even," said she, weeping bitterly. "How could she be so cruel as to give me up? surely to her I have done no wrong."

"I always thought that Madlle. votre sœur was a very cool and prudent person," said the Marchese, sneeringly; "and doubtless she sees now that it is most for her interest to be of your papa's opinion."

Julia's sobs prevented her replying, but Merlin, who was in the room, and endeavouring to soothe her mistress, answered indignantly—

“Miss Bellfield is incapable of a selfish feeling, Signore Marchese, and I am sure she would give her life for Miss Julia; but she is the most obedient of daughters, and if Mr. Bellfield has commanded her not to write, she would not disobey him, whatever the effort might cost her.”

“Quanto è seccante una cameriera predica-trice !” (How tiresome a preaching lady’s-maid is !) said the husband, internally ; but turning to Julia, he, with many tender expressions, besought her to dry her tears. “Indeed, you are unreasonable, my beloved,” said he, “to expect papa to be placare’d (pacified) instantly, he must put you in penitenza for a little, you know, in order that you may value his forgiveness the more when it comes ; but before he leaves Rome, or at all events by the time he reaches England, all will be as we wish, depend upon it, and en attendant we shall amuse ourselves very well in bella Napoli ; you would not wish to fly from it, dearest, the moment it is become your country : if you do, you will make me think you are weary of me, as well as of it.”

"Pray forgive me, dear Girolamo," said Julia, smiling through her tears; "you know what my love is both for you and your country, which my affection for my father and sister never can diminish or interfere with. I shall try to hope the best, but do let us quit this place, which I cannot endure. Can we not go direct to your place in Calabria?—the summer is just the season for being in the country, and I should much prefer passing it there to being in town. Then you will have time to make all the improvements you propose; I shall plan out my English garden, we shall sing and read together, and oh! we shall be so happy."

The sposo looked very much perplexed, but soon recovering himself, he said—

"I am sorry, carissima, to object to any plan of yours, but Calabria at present would be much too hot for you; we must manage to pay it a visit some spring or autumn. I have been thinking," continued he, "that the most agreeable place we can spend the warm weather in, will be Capodimonte. There we shall be within reach of the corso and

the theatre, and some of my friends will drop in, if we should happen to be at home of an evening."

"But I don't care for the corso, or the theatre, or" ("your friends," she was going to add, but checking herself, she said) "any society but yours; why can we not go at once to your palace in Naples? I do long so to see my new home; I have no doubt I shall admire your magnificent salons, but I shall not be satisfied till I have made my suite of apartments entirely English. If I cannot find all the furniture I want in Naples, we can easily order it from Paris or London."

"How fast your little tongue runs, Julia mia!" said her annoyed husband; "you will think I do nothing but pull down your chateaux en Espagne this morning, but you forget that I have been living en garçon in my palazzo, which has not been newly furnished since long before my father's death, it is therefore not at all fit to receive you till everything is changed and renewed. If your good padre would only come forward with a pretty little

sum, then you might make it as English as you please, but we must wait for good news, before we can attempt doing all that is required."

"We may at least begin," said the persevering Julia, who had never almost known contradiction in her life, and certainly never upon the score of expense; but Girolamo began to lose patience, he therefore only added—

"We shall see when we get there; I have lent the house for a short time to a sick friend, and you would not have me turn her out without a proper notice. Flattering myself at one time that we should go to England with your father, I did not think we should require the palace till the winter, I therefore did not hesitate to grant the invalid's request, who thought change of air might do her good."

"You are always kind, and thinking of others more than of yourself," said the unsuspecting Julia. "But I may go and visit this lady, may I not, and then I shall see the house?"

"Certainement, ma chère," was the reply.

“ And now I shall go and make arrangements for our returning to Naples by the first packet.”

Julia did not feel much satisfied with this conversation, it seemed as if the bright vision she had hitherto buoyed herself up with was already beginning to fade from her sight ; her thoughts, however, soon returned to her father and sister, and, alone with Merlin, she once more began to weep, but the latter by degrees succeeded in composing her, prudently advising her not to appear too much cast down before her husband, as that might make him think she regretted having married him, and that if she would but be patient, all would come right in a little time. Julia promised to follow her advice, and a few days after they sailed for Palermo, where they paid a short visit to the Duchessa di Merola, and then proceeded to Naples. Julia's heart swelled when they landed, and particularly when she looked at the windows of the hotel where she had lived so lately with those dear relatives whom it might be her destiny to meet no more ; but, remembering Merlin's

counsel, she concealed her emotion, and felt much relieved when the Marchese proposed their going at once to the villa he had taken for them on Capodimonte. It was the third piano (or floor) of a large house very near the Royal palace, which to Julia was a recommendation, as she would have the Royal Bosco to walk in; and although the badly-furnished rooms seemed to her English eyes destitute of every comfort, the view from the windows was fine, and there was a magnificent terrace on the top of the house, so she strove to look pleased, for she saw that the Marchese was perfectly unconscious that anything was wanting; but, feeling her head ache, she declined taking coffee with her husband, and retired immediately to her room to endeavour to repose.

Merlin, meanwhile, went to take a survey of the premises, with which she was but little satisfied. The Marchese's establishment was very small, consisting only of a shabbily-dressed cameriere (house servant), a coachman, and a younger man servant, who acted as chambermaid, and also went

out with the carriage; and lastly a cook, who was the most dirty and uninviting-looking person in the *ménage*. The maestro di casa (butler) had been left in charge of the house in town.

“Ah! poor, dear child! How she will be disgusted with all this!” said Merlin to herself when she had finished her investigation. “And to think of having a man to do out her bed-room! But that I shall never permit while I can do it for her. Thank Heaven! my room is close to hers; I shall be at hand to supply all her wants myself, and by every means in my power to allow her to feel as little as possible the terrible change she has brought upon herself.”

The Marchese, upon Julia's retiring to her room, immediately set off to Naples, telling Merlin that he had business at his banker's, but should return by dinner time. Julia continued to sleep for an hour or two and awoke refreshed, when Merlin advised her taking a little soup, as she had not yet tasted anything, and dinner was ordered at a late hour.

Julia made no objection, and Merlin went herself to the kitchen to procure it; but on making her request to the cook he stared at her as if he did not understand her, and when she desired the cameriere to explain, the man replied that the Marchese had only made an agreement with him to provide dinner; he had said nothing of anything being wanted before, and that without orders from "sua eccellenza" he could give nothing.

Poor Merlin was sadly annoyed, but, unwilling to distress her lady by giving her such an idea of the family arrangements on this first day of her arrival, she went to her own room, and taking from the remains of her English stores some portable soup, she quickly prepared a cupful, which she carried to Julia, saying she hoped she would content herself with that, as the soup for dinner was not yet ready.

She then began making her mistress's room as comfortable as she could, by having a sofa and arm-chair she found in one of the anterooms carried into it, assuring Julia,

with a good-humoured smile, that she would soon make her soft cushions for both. She next procured a small table by means of Giovanni (the cameriere already mentioned, whom she found very civil and obliging), and having placed an old-fashioned mirror upon it, along with the Marchesa's English dressing-box, she proceeded to unpack her wardrobe, the arrangement of which and the changing her dress she managed to occupy Julia with till the Marchese returned at five o'clock.

He looked heated and tired, and his wife, affectionately putting her hand upon his burning forehead, entreated he would bathe his temples and dress before he ordered dinner, as she was in no sort of hurry for it.

"No, no," replied he, "there is no opera to-night, so there is no occasion for dressing. Should any one call they will not expect me to be in gran' gala (high dress), as we are in campagna (the country). Bring me my abito di camera (dressing gown), Giovanni," added he, and without further ceremony,

taking off his coat and replacing it by his dressing gown, he prepared to sit down to table, dinner being immediately brought in.

"You must excuse, love," said he, "if you do not find everything according to your English ideas; we are not so ceremonious in these respects as your compatriotes are. If you wish any change made, of course it shall be as you like, only let us rest ourselves first."

Julia, faintly smiling, assured him she felt no wants; but her looks unconsciously contradicted her words, as she gazed at the single slovenly servant and the ill-arranged table, so different from the exquisite cleanliness and luxurious elegance to which she had always been accustomed at her father's house, Mr. Bellfield having a pride in seeing three or four servants in handsome livery round his table, even when alone with his daughters. Julia, however, checked herself in making the comparison, and swallowed her soup in silence; and, when it was removed, the *alesso* (or boiled meat) was brought round, ready cut up, and, having

been first offered to her and then to the Marchese, it was carried away, and several other Neapolitan dishes followed in the same manner.

“This saves a world of trouble ; does it not, *ma chère* ?” said her husband. “But you do not eat. Pray taste this *maccaroni alla Napolitana* ; I am sure you will like it.”

And poor Julia took a little of it upon her plate, but the smell of garlic in it was so revolting to her that even her great desire to please the Marchese could not overcome it, and she was obliged to send it away. In order, however, not to appear to refuse everything, she begged Giovanni to bring back some roast chicken she had allowed to pass before ; and he accordingly went to the kitchen to ask for it, but, quickly returning, he said—

“I am sorry, signora, that I cannot bring you the chicken. The cook says that, having made its *giro* (round), he sent some of it to your *cameriera*, and the remainder belongs to him.”

Julia looked inquiringly at the Marchese

for an explanation, at the same time saying it was of no consequence, as she had dined.

And Girolamo, laughing, said, "Oh, you will understand all our customs in time! We generally agree with our cooks to give us a certain number of dishes, which after having been carried round once or more, as may have been agreed upon, a portion (as Giovanni tells you) is sent to the lady's-maid, who is the only servant that is fed in my house, and the cook may either sell the rest to his fellow-servants, or dispose of it in any way he pleases.* Our domestics are all such thieves," continued the Marchese in English; "this is the only way to deal with them by which we can be the least cheated."

* This Neapolitan manner of sending up dinner must not be confounded with tables laid out and served *à la Russe*, which fashion was not introduced at Naples at the period of which I am writing, and it was from the natives themselves I heard of their manner of arranging with their cooks—viz., that the dishes should make a certain number of "giri" (rounds) of the table. The bargain is often so strict that a dish of game is only allowed to make one giro, because, as it cannot contain many birds, if it went round more than once, nothing, probably, might be left for the cook.

"You must bear with my ignorance, dear Girolamo," said Julia, "and do not suppose I mean to find fault when I ask questions. All my desire is to be a good Neapolitan wife, and you shall see how quickly I shall conquer all my English prejudices."

Coffee now made its appearance, which having drank, the Marchese said he would go and take his siesta, advising Julia to do the same.

"I am not yet quite Neapolitan enough for that," answered she, smiling; "but I shall amuse myself with a book or my guitar while you sleep."

"Arivederti, then," said Girolamo, as, kissing his hand to her, he retired to take his repose.

Julia felt that she had more than sufficient to occupy her thoughts without the aid either of music or reading, and she was still sitting where her husband left her, deeply absorbed in the present, past, and future, when Giovanni came to inform her that several Neapolitan ladies were below, and desired to pay their respects to her.

"How shall I receive them without your

master?" said Julia. "Do say I am not at home."

"They already know that vostra eccellenza is within," replied Giovanni. "The porter told them so; but my master has been awake some time, and is now smoking."

"Then you must admit them," said his lady, and, running to her room, she found the Marchese stretched upon the bed with a cigar in his mouth, the red brick floor bearing evident marks of his having made no ceremony of spitting all over it. "My dear Girolamo, how can you bear this suffocating atmosphere?" said Julia, flying to open the windows. "But do get up: here are several duchessas and marchesas come, whom I never saw before, and I shall feel so awkward in receiving them if you do not assist me."

"Che seccatura!" (what a bore!) groaned the sposo, "who thought of their coming to-night? But send the mariti in to me, and I shall be with you presently."

Julia reluctantly obeyed. She had never yet made the acquaintance of any Italian

ladies, except the Duchessa di Merola, whom she only endured because she was the aunt of her husband, and, when her visitors addressed her, their harsh discordant voices (for which Neapolitan women of all ranks are remarkable) and their familiar manner of saluting her on each cheek, made her involuntarily shrink from them, and she blushed under the bold gaze of their husbands and the cavalieri by whom they were attended. The latter, however, retired to the Marchese, and she endeavoured to find topics of conversation to entertain the ladies with, which must soon have failed her had their attention not been fortunately attracted by a beautiful English muslin dress she wore, and also by some exquisite lace upon her cap, which afforded them an ample field to display their scientific knowledge of the toilette, and Julia gladly allowed them to expatiate to each other upon the subject, screaming at the utmost extent of their voices, till the entrance of the Marchese, whom they immediately assailed with inquiries of when he meant to engage a palco (box) at San'

Carlo, for the Marchesa ; and one of them, the Duchessa Caravetta, making them an offer to share hers, it was agreed that Julia should go to it the following evening to see if it pleased her before the Marchese should fix it. The ladies soon after took their leave, when Girolamo remarked how glad he was that the Duchessa had made the proposal.

"The expense will be but trifling," added he, "for the summer months, and it will always be a *réunion* for us, as the Duchessa knows every one."

"I hope you do not mean that we shall go to the theatre every evening," said Julia. "In this hot weather it would be anything but agreeable, and we should be so much happier at home."

"What on earth should we do after the evening drive, *ma petite*, in this dull villa, where there is scarcely a chance of our seeing any one?"

"Oh, never fear our being dull," said the lovely young wife, her countenance lighting up with something of its natural vivacity. "You will sing to me, which I shall much

ladies, except that
 she only ended
 aunt of her
 addressed her
 (for which
 are remarkable
 of salutary
 involuntarily
 blushed
 banished
 attended
 that

music I could hear at
 we tire of that, you
 while I work, and we can
 subjects of conversation. Do
 how short the evenings ap-
 you used to come to the Gran'
 We were both surprised when
 midnight strike, and why should it
 otherwise now?"
 "You must learn to lose the romanesque,
 said her lord, patting her cheek,
 that you are a wife. It is all very
 well living only in each other's sight when
 people are innamorati (lovers), but after
 marriage if we were to continue such scioc-
 chesze (nonsense), we should only be laughed
 at by all Naples. It is not that I do not
 love you as much as ever," added he, with
 his usual affected tenderness, seeing her
 eyes fill with tears, "but you must be aware
 that in the world we must attend to the
 bienséances. You would not like to hear
 your Girolamo quizzed as ridiculous, and
 blamed for having married an English wife
 who makes him so?"

oor Julia could not answer, her heart as too full, and the Marchese, pretending not to observe her emotion, took up the guitar, which he touched like a master, and, accompanying himself to a sonnet he had composed for Julia in the days of their love, he soon absorbed all her attention, and ere he concluded she had forgotten all her sorrows and believed herself the happiest of wives, only blaming her folly in having found a fault in anything he wished her to do.

They then went out to take their drive, and on their return Julia rang the bell and desired the servant to bring tea. The man stared and looked at his master, who said, laughing—

“Giovanni fears you are *raffreddata* (have a cold), *cara mia*, on hearing you ask for tea. We Neapolitans never think of taking it except as a medicine, and in the hot weather it is considered *veleno* (poison). Positively, my darling, I cannot allow you to hurt your nerves by taking it. I said nothing against it at Malta, because I did not wish to make

you change all your habits at once ; but now that you are fairly settled as a native, you must, a poco a poco (by degrees), adopt ours. We shall sup presently, and in the mean time let me recommend a glass of iced water ; it will do you much more good than your boiling-hot bevanda " (drink).

Julia accepted the water, but she could not help remembering how often the Marchese had assured her that himself and all his household should become English for her sake ; but quietly admitting that, perhaps, tea might be hurtful in so hot a climate, she begged he would accompany her to the terrace, to admire the view from it by moonlight.

Girolamo, well pleased to see that she promised to be so complying a wife, was in high good humour, and knowing well how to make himself agreeable, he had never appeared more amiable in Julia's eyes. They continued their promenade until nearly eleven o'clock, when a servant announced supper, and they descended to the dining-room. The meal (in true Neapolitan style) consisted of

a dish of fried fish, salad, fruit, and wine, of all of which the Marchese partook heartily, but Julia, unaccustomed to eat at that late hour, declined tasting anything, which, however, did not lessen her husband's appetite.

"You will be as hungry as I am in a little time," said he, "so I shall not press you to eat till you are inclined for it." And as soon as he had finished his repast they retired to rest.

"Shall we not take an early walk to-morrow morning, Girolamo?" said Julia. "I long to see the royal grounds, which we may enter by six o'clock."

"Dio mene libera!" (Heaven defend me from it!) replied the Marchese. "What should we do there at that hour, without a soul to speak to? Besides, in the summer I always have a pipe before I get up. But do not mind me, there is a vineyard below; you can take Merlin with you and walk there. I should not like your going to the Bosco alone."

Julia gave another sigh of disappointment as she laid her head upon her pillow, but, rising at early dawn, she left the Marchese

to his slumbers, and sallied forth with her faithful maid, pleased with the idea of having a delightful walk in a lovely green vineyard ; but here, again, disappointment was her portion. There were no walks, only narrow paths of about a foot and a-half wide, dug out in the soft earth, consequently they were full of dust, with the roots of the vines crossing them in many places, as well as great stones, which made it quite painful for Julia to walk with her thin shoes. Then, although she greatly admired the luxuriant festoons of the vines, which were trained from tree to tree, she could not have the enjoyment of walking under them, the ground being all cultivated and full of crops, either of Indian corn or vegetables.

“This will not do, Merlin,” said she, when they had reached the end of the vineyard. “I will rather return home and sit upon the little terrace behind my dressing-room. There, at least, I shall have fine air till the sun comes round upon it.”

“Yes, and you may breakfast there like-

wise, my dear lady," said Merlin. "The Marchese, I hear, never takes anything but a cup of coffee in the morning; but you must not be starved. I have brought plenty of tea from Malta, and my master cannot be afraid of its hurting your nerves so early in the day; besides, he will not even be annoyed by seeing your breakfast, as he will not rise for several hours yet. I find Giovanni so very obliging and good-humoured; he will give me all I want."

Julia readily agreed to the proposal, and her affectionate abigail soon arranged all very comfortably, making her young mistress's breakfast more *à l'Anglaise* than she had done since she left the Gran' Bretagna. Julia could not help feeling the loneliness of the meal, but she would not allow even Merlin to see her melancholy, and, gratefully thanking her for all her kind attentions, she strove to be cheerful, and met the Marchese with a smiling countenance when, about eleven o'clock, he made his appearance.

"Do you want anything from Naples to-

day except a piano, *ma chère*?" said he. "I am now going in search of one for you."

"Let me go with you, pray," said she. "I shall assist your choice, and we can drive round by your palace. I should like even to see its exterior. When do you think your invalid friend will be able to receive a visit from me?"

"Not yet, not yet, Julia," replied her husband hurriedly. "She is very weak and nervous I am told, so you must wait till she is stronger. Besides, I could not think of dragging you down to Naples in the heat of the day, it would make you quite ill. You can trust me, I think, to choose your instrument, and in the mean time you must keep quiet for the opera to-night, as you will have to return the visits of the ladies who called on you last night, in their respective boxes."

"How I hate the thoughts of such an exhibition!" thought Julia; but she silently acquiesced in her husband's wishes, and he took his departure, telling her he should return by two o'clock, at which hour they

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should now dine, and the Neapolitan wife, taking up a book, tried to banish *triste* thoughts by its perusal.

The Marchese was in no very enviable frame of mind as he quitted his sposa, and, throwing himself into his carriage, he exclaimed—

“Ma come mai deve finir quest embroglio?” (but how must this embarrassment end?) In the course of my life I have managed to extricate myself from many guai (troubles), but this seems to be the most difficult of all. It will be impossible for me to keep Julia long in ignorance of who it is that occupies my house, and if Hortense once sees her, her jealousy will know no bounds. At present she only thinks of her as my ugly English wife, whom I have married for money, that I may have the means of gratifying my amica's (mistress's) caprices, but so young and beautiful a girl as Julia will, I well know, be the object of her hatred and revenge. Pazienza! (patience!) I must go and see what can be done.” So saying he desired the coachman to drive to Palazzo Landini.

It is now time to explain that the unworthy inmate who now occupied the place of the innocent and unsuspecting Julia, was a French *danseuse*, of some celebrity in her profession, and who was also admired for her personal charms. She had been under the protection of the Marchese for more than a year previous to his becoming acquainted with the Bellfields, a circumstance he was, of course, most anxious they should be ignorant of, and when he made up his mind to propose for Julia, he would gladly have got rid of his mistress, of whom he was now weary, and whose imperious temper, irritated by the decline of her power over him, rendered her anything but an agreeable companion. To dismiss her at that time, however, was impossible, as he had not the means to make the settlement upon her he had promised, so he thought the best way to quiet her for the moment was to tell her that a rich Englishwoman had fallen in love with him, and that, though marriage to him would be a terrible seccatura (bore), he saw no other means of getting his debts paid, as he

found that his fortune was entirely ruined, which in a very little time must be known to all the world. He then assured Hortense that this necessary arrangement should make no difference in his feelings towards her; that, on the contrary, it would only afford him a better opportunity of showing his affection for her, as his silly little wife could be no interruption to their meeting as often as they chose, and her fortune would enable him to supply her every wish. The amica highly approved of the plan, and Girolamo having always spoken most contemptuously of his intended bride, declaring she was both plain and stupid, she felt no jealousy of her, and was quite as anxious as the Marchese himself that the match should be brought about. The latter had never told her of his intimacy with the Bellfields until he had arranged everything for his departure to Malta, so she had never (to her knowledge) seen Julia, and at the time they returned to Naples, she was confined to the sofa by a severe sprained ankle, which, the surgeon assured her, if she did not take the greatest

care of, she would never be able to dance again.

The Marchese had flattered himself that his father-in-law's displeasure would soon pass away, and that Julia and he would, at all events, be invited to follow Mr. and Miss Bellfield to England for a time, and that when he became possessed of his wife's fortune, he could easily pay off Hortense, and persuade her to leave Naples before he returned to it. But all this plan had been rendered abortive by Mr. Bellfield's determined resolution not to forgive his daughter ; and his only remaining hope was, that by going to Capodimonte, and also by the assistance of this fortunate sprain, he might still for some time prevent Hortense from seeing Julia. What perplexed him at the present moment was the latter's great desire to see his palace, and he thought if he could only persuade his *amie* to go to the country for change of air, he could take the opportunity while she was absent to gratify his wife ; and always trusting that ere long the pardon from Mr. Bellfield must arrive, which would

put all to rights, he tried to appear as gay and as much at his ease as usual on entering Hortense's apartment. He found, however, that lady in a most unamiable temper, the monotony of her present life being utterly uncongenial to her taste; besides, she had been rather offended with Girolamo the preceding day, for having paid her but a very hurried visit.

"I have brought you a basket of the first muscatel grapes I have been able to procure, belle Hortense," said he, as his servant placed them on the table.

"Thank you," answered she, coldly. "The Marchese di Ravezza sent me some of the very finest I ever tasted above a week ago."

"How do you find yourself to-day, ma chère?" continued Girolamo, without seeming to notice her ill humour. "Will this pretty little ankle never get well?" looking at it with great apparent interest, as it was extended on the sofa before him.

"I don't think you are much concerned whether it does or not," said Hortense, angrily. "You scarcely had time to inquire

for me yesterday ; your bella moglie Inglese (your handsome English wife) seems to keep you in good order already, and, after all, you have made but a bad business of this marriage of yours. Is there no letter from the father yet ? How long are you to live upon the hope of a pardon ? That may be very substantial food for you, but it does not satisfy my appetite. I want a sum of money immediately, to carry me next week to Ischia ; the doctors advise me to go there for the baths, but my purse is quite empty, and unless you can supply me with three hundred ducats, I shall be obliged to apply to Madame la Marquise," added she, smiling maliciously.

The last-mentioned threat, as she was well aware, was more than sufficient to induce Girolamo to promise her whatever she wanted, although how he was to procure the money he knew not, as he was already drowned in debt, and it being known how very uncertain his prospects were as to ever receiving his wife's fortune, he knew he could only borrow money at an exorbitant interest.

"Your wishes are laws to me, ma belle,"

replied he, in his most insinuating tone. "You know my circumstances, and how these thieves of money-lenders impose when they think one is in their power ; but your health is too precious to me to allow of a moment's hesitation in procuring what is necessary for it, whatever it may cost me. I shall go directly and arrange about it, and to-morrow you shall have the sum you require."

Hortense, satisfied to have gained her point, condescendingly held out her hand for him to kiss ; and, having bid her adieu, he turned to depart, adding, in as indifferent a voice as he could assume—

"Of course you were joking in what you said just now about applying to the Marchesa ; but let me advise you, Hortense (as much on your own account as on mine), to continue to be as careful as you have hitherto been to prevent a hint of our *liaison* reaching the ears of the latter : you know how prudish these English are, and if old Bellfield heard of it, I should be ruined in his opinion for ever, and your expectations would also be at an end."

"Do not alarm yourself," replied the amica, sarcastically; "we understand each other perfectly, and *I* am as much aware of *my* interest as *you* are of *yours*. Addio," said she, in conclusion, with a Neapolitan wave of her hand, and Girolamo left her.

"I wonder if Julia has as much money remaining as 300 ducats," said he to himself, as he re-entered his carriage. "I remember she told me she was well supplied when I offered her some at Malta. She wants nothing at present, and I can easily give it to her again. I shall talk to her about it before I go to my old Jew."

He then ordered the coachman to drive to the pianoforte shop, and, having chosen one of the best and ordered it to be sent to Capodimonte, he hurried home, where he was met by Julia, as usual, with smiles of welcome, who, holding up her watch to him, exclaimed—

"I thought you would never come; it is considerably past two o'clock."

"I know it, love," answered the Marchese, "and I am very sorry to have kept you wait-

ing ; but I have been detained by the most annoying business. My banker informs me that my *fattore* (manager) in Calabria, whom I have for some time suspected to be a *birbone* (rascal), has just been arrested for debts of his own ; and that, instead of remittances which I daily expected, there is every reason to fear that he has plundered me to a great extent. But I need not distress you, my Julia, with my private troubles ; I only mention them to account for my being so late of coming. I went in search of a money-lender, to procure 300 ducats to pay a bill for repairs I had lately ordered to be made in Palazzo Landini ; but, after waiting in vain at his office until half an hour ago, I was obliged to come away without seeing him. But I shall call again as we go to San' Carlo this evening, and then I shall be sure to find him."

"No, you shall not," said Julia, eagerly, and, flying to her own room, she instantly returned with a cheque for the sum required, saying, "Take this, dearest Girolamo ; I am very rich, for I have another of the same

still remaining, which poor dear papa gave me on my birth-day, the week before I left him for you," her eyes filling with tears as she spoke. "I have no occasion for money at present, and I shall be so glad to prevent your having to do with Jews. Papa used always to say that when a man went to them, it was the first step to his ruin."

"You are a little angel!" said the Marchese, embracing her; and, although all good feeling was blunted in him, he could not help feeling a qualm of conscience on seeing his innocent wife so unconsciously bestowing her little hoard upon his mistress. "I shall not pain you by refusing to take your money, but I trust that in a very short time I shall be able to return it to you. And now let us go to dinner. Your piano will be here presently, and you will like to try it before we go to the theatre."

The rest of the day, as may be supposed, was all *couleur de rose*, and, in the evening, they adjourned to San' Carlo in high spirits. The Duchessa Caravetta received Julia most graciously, and presented her to many of the

Neapolitan *noblesse*, who crowded to her box from curiosity to see the sposa Inglese. The evident admiration of the gentlemen gratified the vanity of the Marchese, but poor Julia was quite abashed by it, and disgusted by their high-flown compliments, to escape from which she reminded Girolamo that she must pay the visits he spoke of to the other Neapolitan ladies. But in their boxes she found herself subjected to the same annoyance. Each lady had her *petite société* of males, whose occupation it was to flatter and talk nonsense to her, and, of course, it became an imperious duty that these signori should bestow a double portion of their attention upon la belle nouvelle mariée.

The ladies under whom Julia had hoped to shelter herself from these, after inquiring how she liked the prima donna, and offering to send a singing master and a hairdresser to her, recommenced their flirtations, and Julia was truly glad when the performance was ended and she once more found herself alone with her husband; but as he seemed exceedingly pleased with the evening's en-

tainment, she forbore to make any remark to him upon how little she found the society congenial to her taste, though internally she could not help saying—

“My dear, gentle Harriet, how different you are from these frivolous, vulgar Neapolitan women! But I have chosen my lot, and I must be resigned to it. Perhaps time may reconcile me to their manners—at all events, I shall try to like them, as they are the countrywomen of my Girolamo, though he is so superior to them all.”

It may be imagined that the Marchese lost no time the next morning in conveying the sum of money to the danseuse, who received it with great nonchalance; but Girolamo was too happy when, a day or two afterwards, he escorted her and her maid to the mole of Naples and saw them safely placed on board one of the boats for Ischia, and as he returned to his palace, his mind felt relieved of a heavy load.

He immediately gave orders that the apartment should be cleaned and put in some sort of order, before he could venture

to bring Julia to inspect it. He then acquainted the latter with the departure of his "invalid friend," and two days after he accompanied his Marchesa to pay her first visit to Palazzo Landini.

Julia was by this time a little accustomed to the style of the Neapolitan palaces, so she was not so much disappointed with the exterior of this one as she would have been on her first arrival from England; besides, she now looked at it with the determination to be pleased, because it was to be—what has such a charm in the name to an Englishwoman—her home, and the Marchese was quite pleased to see the happy look of satisfaction with which she jumped from the carriage and ran up the wide stairs to the second floor, which was the one they were to occupy.

The Strada Costantinopoli is a wide, airy street that runs behind the Toledo, and the houses are generally lofty and handsome, but they have no view except from the terraces on the roof.

Palazzo Landini receded a little from the

street. It was built, like most of the palaces, in the form of a square, with a paved court in the middle, in the centre of which stood an ancient marble fountain, which for many years had ceased to play, the broken statues which stood around it bearing evidence to its antiquity.

The front of the palace, which contained the three best suites of apartments, faced the street, and there were numerous rooms behind, which had been formerly used as bedrooms when the family happened to be a large one, but these were for the most part small, dull, and dark passage rooms, all opening into each other, which in the present day are rarely furnished except, perhaps, by a statue being placed in each corner of them, and one or two marble slabs standing against the walls.

Palazzo Landini was entered by a very lofty, arched portone (gateway) in the centre of the mansion, which passed entirely through the house as far as the court, thus enabling carriages to enter under cover, and to pass out again by driving round the latter.

The wide staircase was lighted by immensely high windows without glass in them, which is still very much the custom in all the Neapolitan houses, except in those which have been fitted up expressly for foreigners. The pian' terreno (ground floor) consisted of kitchen, servants' rooms, with a coach-house and stables behind.

Julia had expected to find the furniture rather antique, but with all her wish to look only at the bright side of the picture, she felt her spirits sink when she gazed round at the bare and gloomy abode which was from henceforth to be her residence.

The ceilings had been originally finely painted, and from the remains of gilding upon the panels and doors, these must also have been handsome in their day, but now all was dilapidation.

The furniture consisted of narrow divans without backs, covered with faded silk, and placed close to the walls of the room, high-backed, upright, uncomfortable-looking chairs (the painting and gilding of which was entirely worn off), covered with moth-

eaten silk or velvet ; a few marble slabs, and long, narrow, dim-looking mirrors completed the decorations. The windows were without curtains—in short, nothing could look more comfortless and miserable, and Julia, involuntarily comparing Palazzo Landini with the elegant house of her father in London, knew not how to say anything in praise of the former to her husband ; but he, guessing her thoughts, said carelessly—

“ We must do something for these rooms before winter. If your papa would only get the better of his ill humour and be a little generous, then you may fit up a room or two for yourself as much *à l’Anglaise* as you please, but you will soon change your ideas with regard to furniture, after you have been a little longer in Naples. Our climate does not require the same quantity of heavy mobili to keep us warm that yours does in cold England ; but come, *ma chère*, I think we have nothing more to show you. The piano above is like this one, only the rooms are less lofty, and below I have let the apartment lately to a German family.

You look surprised to hear of my being a house-letter," added he, laughing, "but I assure you all the first noblemen in Naples let the part of their palaces they do not require, and if one suite of apartments is sufficient for the family, why should we leave the rest to be inhabited only by the rats and mice?"

"I see I have a great deal to learn, Giro-lamo," replied Julia, "and I hope you will be a patient teacher; but do not let us keep your old maestro di casa standing all day," added she, turning smilingly to the man; but he had a cunning, sinister expression of countenance which chilled her (although he was apparently all obsequiousness to his master), and, checking the kind speech she intended to make, she merely bowed her head, and, taking her husband's arm, she descended the stairs to the carriage, with a heart somewhat heavier than she had ascended them.*

* The writer must here explain that, in the present day, there are many of the Neapolitan *noblesse* who have their palaces (at least, their *salons* for receiving) as ele-

Don Riccardo, as the maestro di casa was called, looked contemptuously after her, then, locking the doors to return to his apartment, he said to the old donna di faccenda (housemaid) who accompanied him—

gantly furnished as they could be, either in Paris or London; but the description just given is no exaggeration or caricature of the abodes of many of the titled natives who figure away in society, especially among the English, where their object is, if possible, to obtain a rich wife. These are either upstarts, whose titles are but of yesterday, and who are despised by their own countrymen, or they are *roués* of ancient families, who, having dissipated all their fortunes, are most anxious to repair them (like the *roués* of all countries) by a moneyed alliance. Possessed of a few showy accomplishments and a good deal of tact in administering flattery, combined with the attraction of having the title of Principe, Duca, or Marchese, they do incalculable mischief wherever they are encouraged, by turning the heads of silly girls, who are new to the world and have never before had their vanity flattered by such apparently devoted lovers; and if they escape making a marriage with them, either because they have a shrewd father, or brother, who hurries them away ere the evil is irremediable, or because the disinterested hero finds out that they have not so large a *dote* as he expected, still the injury, to a certain degree, remains, for they return home with false ideas of everything, thinking all proposals beneath them, unless from a man of title, and despising their countrymen generally, and particularly

“That proud Inglese has made a nice frittata for herself when she married our birbone (rascal) of a master, but she will be obliged to lower her pride before long, or I am mistaken, and to make friends with

because of their sincerity and good taste, which equally prevent them from overwhelming a girl to whom they are really attached with empty compliments. Oh! fathers, mothers, and guardians of young ladies! Be advised by one who has had a thorough experience of the foreign world. Bring not your fair daughters abroad to run the gauntlet of Florence, Rome, and Naples after they have attained the age of sixteen. If you think it is absolutely indispensable for the completion of their education that they should be assured by ocular demonstration of the exact proportions of the Venus de Medicis, the length of St. Peter’s foot, and the circumference of the crater of Vesuvius, for heaven’s sake leave home with them ere they have completed their fourteenth year, accompanied by a sensible and well-principled governess, upon whom you can depend that she will never leave them for a moment. Carry them rapidly over all the sights in these three towns, without permitting them to make the acquaintance of a single native, and when all has been accomplished, return with them, safe and unscathed, to England, there to digest all they have seen at leisure, before they can have become fascinated with a foreign land and discontented with the country where it has pleased God to make their home.

those who are più antica di casa (have been longer in the house) than herself, at least, if she minds her own interest. What an avara (miser) she must be ! the first time that she entered the house not even to give a piastre to any one !”

“ Povera giovane ! quanto è bellissima !” (poor girl ! how beautiful she is !) said the good-humoured Maria. “ You should not blame her, Riccardo ; perhaps the Marchese does not leave any money at her disposal. You know he has not too much at command for himself. She looks so gentle and like a madonna ; she may turn out a very kind padrona.”

“ Vedremo ” (we shall see), said Riccardo, shrugging his shoulders as he retreated into his own premises.

The day following that on which Julia paid her first visit to her own palace was Sunday, which more than ever brought her father and sister to her recollection, as with them she was accustomed to attend service regularly at the English minister's, where it was then performed.

"It will make me very sad, Merlin," said she to the latter as she was dressing her, "to go there alone, but you will take care of me, and Girolamo will set me down and take me up again, I suppose, as he returns from his own church. How I wish he was a Protestant ! But he is so liberal ; he has often told me before we were married that had he not been born and brought up a Roman Catholic and possessing estates in Italy, he would change and become of our religion, in order that we might not have a difference of opinion upon one single subject ; but he says there is, in reality, so very little difference between the two religions, it consists more in a few forms than anything else."

"My dear, dear lady," interrupted Merlin, almost crying, "pray do not allow such an idea to get possession of your mind. It is false, quite false, and you must see it is if you will but reflect for a moment. Poor Miss Bellfield would be miserable if she thought you could ever give utterance to such an opinion. I do not mean to blame the Marchese for saying so, but he did it

because he is ignorant what our religion is. I rejoice, however, that he will not interfere with you on this point, and I shall pray earnestly to the Lord that you may ever be kept steady in the true faith."

Girolamo then entered, and Julia told him of her intention of going to church, and inquired if he would accompany her.

"You can drop me at the church of San' Ferdinando," said he, "and I will come and pick you up when your service is ended, but I fear you will find it very hot at that hour to come up all the way to this villa again; besides, I forgot to tell you that the other night the Duchessa di Caravetta begged we would dine with her at three o'clock to-day. You can afterwards drive with her to the Corso, and in the evening we shall all go together to San' Carlo."

Julia opened her large blue eyes very wide at all these proposals, and then said—

"You forget, dear Girolamo, that we Protestants do not go to the theatre of a Sunday, and I should much prefer dining with the Duchessa some other day and taking

a quiet drive with you to going to the Corso, which always appears to me like a public place."

"What a little santa (saint) of a wife I have got!" replied the Marchese, looking more cross than Julia had ever seen him. "I had no idea you were so bigoted; I suppose these are some of your sister Harriet's notions, for I have very often seen English ladies at the theatre on this forbidden day. At the last gala there were several boxes quite full of them; and as to the Corso, what harm can there be in driving there more than in your Hyde Park?"

"I have never yet been there, and Harriet told me she never went," said Julia, much annoyed. "I cannot go to San' Carlo, and I wish you would make my apology to the Duchessa, as she would only tease me about my reasons for not going."

"Faites comme vous voudrez, belle dévote," replied the husband, with apparent indifference. "I am sorry I must leave you alone all day, but I cannot be unpolite to my friends because you have such queer

ideas. I shall leave you the carriage, and you can take a drive with Merlin, and afterwards send it to the theatre to bring me home."

He then coldly left the room, and Julia could no longer restrain her tears.

"He is offended with me," said she to Merlin. "What must I do? I cannot bear his angry looks; this is the first time I ever displeased him. Do run after him and tell him I shall go to the Duchessa's (though I cannot to San' Carlo), and then we shall only be a few hours separated."

"Forgive me, my dearest mistress," said Merlin earnestly, "but I cannot carry any such message, as I should be unfaithful to the promise I made to your sainted mother if I was capable of assisting you to act otherwise. You have only done your duty to God by being steady on this occasion, and you would be tempting danger by dining with the Duchessa. Had she been an old friend, of your own religion, it would have been very different; but, placed in your difficult position, if you yield once, you are lost."

Julia sighed deeply, and felt as if the unhappiness of her married life might be dated from this day; but she said no more, and, drying her tears, she finished her toilette and joined the Marchese, who, on his part, did not again urge her, and they scarcely exchanged words during the drive to Naples.

Julia proceeded, after leaving him, to the house of the English minister. She felt particularly shy and uncomfortable on entering, as she was quite unacquainted with the few persons who were present. However, she placed herself as near the door as possible and made her exit the moment the service was over.

The remainder of the day seemed the longest and most miserable she had ever spent. She tried to read and to listen to Merlin doing so, but her thoughts wandered, and, for the first time since she parted from him, the image of Mordaunt presented itself to her mind.

"He, at least, would approve of my conduct to-day," said she with a sigh; and she rejoiced when she at last saw the sun go

down, but she could not resolve to go to rest till she had seen her husband again.

“If I could but be sure that he is not seriously angry with me,” said she, “I should sleep sound;” and she accordingly determined to sit up till he came home.

It was very late when he arrived, but with delight Julia perceived that all his bad humour had disappeared. He chid her for sitting up for him, but added—

“I met an acquaintance of yours to-night at San’ Carlo—a Mrs. Melville, who says she will pay you a visit to-morrow. She is but lately married, and came to Naples for her wedding jaunt. She seems a lively, pleasing person; her marito (husband) does not look very bright, but they are both very good-natured. They have met you frequently during the Carnival, and you have exchanged visits, but Mrs. Melville says she found Miss Bellfield so stiff and reserved she could make no intimacy with her. I have told her that you are just the reverse, and she is prepared to be very fond of you. It will be pleasant for you to have a countrywoman

as a companion, and I hope you will cultivate her friendship."

Julia perfectly remembered this lady as a silly, flirting woman, whose manner both Harriet and she particularly disliked, but after the scene of the morning she feared again to offend, so she merely said she remembered Mrs. Melville, but thought she had left Naples, "which," added she internally, "I fervently wish had been the case."

The next morning she was sitting alone, when her expected visitor was announced, who, running into the room in the most familiar manner and seizing both Julia's hands, exclaimed—

"My dear Marchesa! how delighted I am to see you, and to find you without either papa or sister, neither of whom (*entre nous*) I could endure. Are you not charmed to be married, and a Marchesa, and away from them?"

"I certainly am most happy in an amiable husband," replied Julia coldly, "but the title of Marchesa does not, in my estimation,

increase my felicity. The only cloud upon my path is the thought that my marriage displeased my dear father, and that I am separated from him and my beloved sister."

"Well, how queer that is!" said Mrs. Melville, laughing. "I should feel just the contrary ; but perhaps you are right to talk as you do, as you are in a great degree dependent upon them. What a charming person the Marchese is !—so very polite and agreeable ! Melville is as much pleased with him as I am, and he has promised to visit us very often, and to bring you with him. Will you dine with us to-morrow ?"

Julia would gladly have declined, but Girolamo, just then entering, at once accepted the invitation, and, after a little more trifling conversation, Mrs. Melville rose to depart, carrying off the Marchese with her—to assist her husband, she said, to make some purchases. Julia felt rather relieved by his absence, as it saved her from being obliged to give any opinion of the lady for the moment, and she said with a sigh, as she saw them drive off—

“ I am glad Girolamo has found an English companion : it would be very dull for him to be always with me alone. I must try to like Mrs. Melville. She does seem very good-humoured, and though her manner is silly, perhaps Harry and I did her injustice in supposing her a flirt.”

When the Marchese returned, therefore, she was quite ready to assent to his praises of her, and prepared next day, with something like pleasure, to dine with an English party. But, to her disappointment, she found it entirely composed of Neapolitans, there being scarcely any foreigners in town at that season ; Mrs. Melville, besides, preferring the flattery the former lavishly bestowed in return for their dinners, to the society of her own compatriots.

The evening was concluded at the theatre, and in the same way a few weeks passed without any particular event occurring.

The Marchese did not press Julia again to go to the theatre on Sunday, nor did he make any objections to her attending her own service ; indeed, she began to suspect

that he was better pleased to have that day entirely at his own disposal.

Mr. Melville and he were inseparable, and Julia feared, from something the latter one day let fall, that they were in the habit of playing high together.

Girolamo frequently came home in exuberant spirits, and seemed to have money at command, though she was aware he had received no remittances from Calabria.

Melville was a most silly, weak boy, little more than of age, and his fortune being very large, he was just the person to fall an easy prey to so needy and designing a character as the Neapolitan. No letters were received either from Mr. Bellfield or his daughter, which was another source of deep sorrow for Julia. She had again written to both since she had heard from their banker in Naples of their being arrived in London, but her letters had once more been returned unopened, and Girolamo, enraged at this, and feeling for the present no need of pecuniary assistance, positively commanded her to make no further attempts to conciliate her father.

To this distress was added now that of perceiving that Girolamo daily became more careless and indifferent towards her. He spent the greatest part of his time at the Melvilles', where Julia was but rarely invited; her tastes and Mrs. Melville's being totally dissimilar, and her once gay spirits quite subdued, the latter found her a very dull companion, and Julia would have been very glad to withdraw entirely from her society, but she endured it in order that she might sometimes pass a day there, and not be always separated from her husband, whom she still fondly loved.

The Marchese had no near relations in Naples; his father's family were settled in Calabria. His mother was a Roman, and Julia had frequently heard him mention a brother of hers, who was a cardinal and a rich man, from whom he had expectations.

It was about the beginning of September that Girolamo one morning entered the room with a letter in his hand, saying—

“My uncle the cardinal is just arrived.

He has been unwell, and the doctors have ordered him to Naples for change of air. I shall ask him to come and stay with us here. I think the air of Capodimonte may do him good, and I am sure you will be glad to have an uncle of mine as your guest," added he, with his former coaxing manner.

"I shall be only too happy, dearest Girolamo," said Julia eagerly. "Pray assure him that he shall find a most affectionate niece in me. I shall go instantly with Merlin and arrange an apartment for him."

The Marchese departed, and Julia, calling her maid, told her who was coming and what she wished to be done; but Merlin did not appear to share her satisfaction, and could not help saying—

"I wish the cardinal had remained where he was. We shall have him trying to make you a Roman Catholic; do, I beseech you, be on your guard, my dear lady. This is just one of the moments of danger I dread for you."

"Nonsense!" said Julia. "You are always foreseeing evils, dear Merlin, and

surely you would not have me be inhospitable to the uncle of my husband? Do not fear his eloquence having any effect upon me; when I have not been induced to change my religion on account of Girolamo, certainly I can never be blinded by another."

"May the Almighty strengthen and uphold you in your resolution!" replied the good Merlin, sighing, and the subject was dropped.

Girolamo returned before dinner, accompanied by his relative, with whose appearance and manner Julia was immediately captivated.

He was a man little past the prime of life, and in features he was strikingly like his nephew, but the expression of his countenance was much more open and intelligent, and his whole demeanour was mild and pleasing.

He looked, rather than expressed, his admiration of his lovely niece, and addressed her very affectionately, but without the fulsome compliments usually paid by his

countrymen, which was a great relief to her; and, observing his pale and invalid looks, her kind heart warmed towards him, and she longed to have an opportunity of nursing him, as if he had been her father.

"I see I shall soon be jealous of you, zio mio" (my uncle), said Girolamo, as he remarked Julia's attention to him during dinner. "I have never seen *ma petite femme* so taken with any one—myself, of course, always excepted."

"Indeed the prepossession is quite mutual, Girolamo," replied his uncle, "and I hope I shall be enabled to show my dear niece how grateful I feel for her kindness."

After dinner, the gentlemen being left alone, while Julia went to prepare for their drive, the Marchese asked the Cardinal what he thought of his bride.

"E una bella pupatilla" (she is a pretty little doll), answered the uncle, "and I should think she could be easily led if you go the right way to work. When you wrote to me that you had run off with an English heiress, I thought that, in your circumstances, it was

the best thing you could do ; and that, when you were once in possession of her *dote* (fortune), you would of course do your utmost to bring her into our church. But this old *bestia* of a father of hers appears quite inexorable, and, by all accounts, the other daughter will be his sole heiress. It is therefore of no use waiting longer in the hope of anything from him ; and I am only surprised that you have not ere this done something towards changing her opinions."

"Vostra Eminenza sa" (your Eminence knows), said Girolamo, with a laugh, "that I have not much of the *prête* (priest) in my composition, and by my own eloquence I could do little ; and, to tell you the truth, I am very indifferent on the subject. Had I known how the affair would turn out, you may believe I never would have tied myself to a portionless wife, above all to a prudish English one, who are so *exigeantes* they expect a husband to play the lover *per sempre*" (for ever.)

"But you must take an interest in this matter of the religion," returned the Cardi-

nal; "it will be considered quite a scandolo (scandal) for me to have a Protestant niece; and I expect you will pay attention to what I say, if you hope for any assistance from me. You are, I know, a ruined man; but I have the power to pay your debts and save you; and this I solemnly promise to do if, within the next six months, you persuade your wife to become a Roman Catholic. Do you agree to this bargain?"

"Non ho termine per ringraziarvi, caro zio" (I have no words to thank you, dear uncle), said the Marchese. "I shall use my utmost endeavours; but you must pave the way for me: you are so much more *au fait* of the matter than I am."

"I must go cautiously to work," answered the priest, "for, of course, she will be suspicious of me from my profession. Basta (enough)! I shall see how I can proceed when I know her a little better. And now let us accompany mia bella nipote (my handsome niece) to the Strada Nuova."

Julia appeared to revive in health and spirits from the time the Cardinal took up

his residence with them. She found his society most agreeable. His mind was highly cultivated, he had travelled, and was full of information, which he imparted in the most pleasing and unaffected manner; he daily appeared to become fonder of his new niece, and by imperceptible degrees led her to confide all her distresses and anxieties to him, both respecting her father's continued displeasure, and also her fears that Girolamo was beginning to tire of her and to regret that he had married a foreigner.

"I am sure," said she, with tears, "there is no sacrifice I would not make for his happiness; but I seem to have lost all power to please him."

"Indeed you deceive yourself, my dear child," replied his Eminence. "Girolamo is as much attached to you as ever; and you must allow me to say frankly that, if there is any fault, it is on your side, although you are unconscious of it. There are several little things in which, as a wife, you should oblige him, and which he has, I think, shown great forbearance in not urging you

to do. One of these is that of declining to accompany him to the theatre on a Sunday. I know what you would say," continued he, smiling, on seeing she was going to interrupt him—"it is not the custom of your country; and I do not mean to enter into an argument with you upon the question; in fact, I think it might be better if our ladies stayed more at home both on Sundays and Saturdays. Still, in so very immaterial a matter, I would advise you to conciliate your husband by occasionally obliging him. He is aware how many of your countrywomen there are who have no scruples in partaking of the amusement on the Sunday, and he must feel that if you loved him as well as he does you, you would not be so obstinate in refusing to do the same."

Poor Julia knew she ought to reply, "My duty to my God is far superior to that which I owe to my husband, and if others forget this, that should be no rule for me;" but the Cardinal had made this address to her in such soft and silvery tones, and had so completely made her believe that his sole

object in what he said, was to teach her how to preserve her husband's affection, she had not the courage to give utterance to the words which rose to her lips; and the Cardinal, anxious to prevent her from strengthening herself in her determination by again refusing, went on talking without seeming to require an answer.

"Another thing I am convinced you would gratify my nephew much in, dear Julia, is, if you would accompany him sometimes to his church when you have no service at your own, or in the afternoon when your mass is over. I have already told you that I speak without the shadow of an idea of attempting to induce you to change your religion; but there can be no harm in your listening to a good sermon anywhere, and I assure you that there are some first-rate preachers in Naples, with whom you would be very much pleased, and, except for the difference of the language, you might suppose yourself in a chapel in London."

"I should like very much to hear some of these preachers," said Julia, "and I can

have no sort of objection to going at any time with Girolamo. Pray let us all go next Sunday ; I shall talk to him about it whenever he comes in."

"I have begun well," thought the Cardinal, but he only said gently—

"I was sure you would think as I do, cara figlia (daughter), and I told my nephew so, but he felt delicate in proposing it to you, fearing you might misconstrue his motives."

The moment her husband entered the room, Julia eagerly said—

"Girolamo, your uncle promises to take me to hear one of your famous preachers next Sunday. You will go with us, won't you?"

The Marchese, guessing at whose suggestion she made this proposal, looked as pleased as Julia could have wished, and readily agreed to be of the party, continuing through the whole evening to treat her with so much more tenderness than usual, and to be so entirely the Girolamo who had captivated her youthful fancy, that

she seemed to tread on air, and when she retired to her room for the night, Merlin was quite at a loss to account for the change that had taken place for the better in her mistress's spirits, but Julia, for the first time in her life, had a reserve with this faithful servant. She felt that the latter would disapprove of her acceding to either of the Cardinal's propositions, and she therefore determined to be silent on the subject, to avoid all discussion.

A few days after (on the 8th of September), the Festa of Pied di Grotto was to take place, when the king and all the royal family go in state to a chapel at the entrance of the Grotto of Posilippo, to hear mass. The procession, consisting of numerous carriages, passes from the palace along Santa Lucia and the Chiaja, the troops lining each side of the latter, while the Neapolitan ships of war, decorated with all their flags, are drawn up in the bay in front of the Villa Reale, and each ship fires a salute as his majesty passes, both in going and returning from the chapel. The Villa

itself is crowded with Contadini from the neighbourhood, as well as from the more distant provinces, whose gay and varied costumes add much to the picturesque effect, and the *fête* is considered one of the prettiest that take place in Naples.

The Melvilles, who had a house in the Chiaja, invited the Marchese and Julia, with a large party of their friends, to spend the day with them, and look at the Festa from their balconies.

The 8th of September fell that year upon a Sunday, and in the evening there is always a grand gala, or illumination, at the theatre of San' Carlo. The royal family and their suite are attired in court dresses; the nobility are also *en grande tenue*, the ladies making a most brilliant display of jewels. It is, therefore, a sight all foreigners are desirous of seeing.

The Melvilles had a box, and Mrs. M. came to Julia the day preceding the *fête* (while the latter was sitting alone with the Cardinal), saying—

“At last, Marchesa, I hope you will

allow yourself to be tempted. I must have you with me at San' Carlo to-morrow night; it will just be the time to adjourn there when the procession has passed and the troops have dispersed. I wish so much to have an English beauty in my box," added she coaxingly; and, turning to the Cardinal, "your eminence," said she, "I am sure, will plead for me. Do tell this little niece of yours that she will not commit a heinous sin by doing as all the world does for this one night."

"I should never think of interfering with my dearest niece's religious scruples," replied the Cardinal, with his usual soft smile; "but here comes my nephew, who will, I doubt not, be a much more powerful advocate with Julia"—giving her, at the same time, a significant look.

Poor Julia's tell-tale colour varied at this address, which she perfectly understood, and when Girolamo, taking her hand with one of his most insinuating glances, whispered—

"You will oblige me, will you not, dear-

est?" she felt that to say "no" was impossible ; she therefore replied in a low voice—

"You leave me no alternative;" and, thanking Mrs. Melville, she agreed to accompany her. The extravagant delight expressed both by that lady and the Marchese failed to reassure her as to the propriety of the measure ; the Cardinal's speech had more effect in tranquillising her conscience, as, pressing her hand, he said, so as to be heard by her alone—

"How I admire the want of selfishness you have shown in thus getting over your prejudice to please your husband. See how sensible he is of it, and how your sacrifice endears you to him."

Mrs. Melville then took her leave, carrying Girolamo, as usual, with her, and Julia went to her room to consult with Merlin what dress she should wear on the occasion, and also to communicate to the latter her intention of going to the theatre.

"'Tis as I feared !" said Merlin, bursting into tears. "Oh ! my dear Miss Julia !"

(she could yet scarcely ever bring herself to call her Marchesa) "what would your poor mamma or dear Miss Harriet have said, if they could have imagined you would ever come to this?"

"I must beg, Merlin, you will not tease me," said Julia crossly, for the first time in her life. "I have made up my mind, so it is of no use your saying anything more on the subject."

"I see, indeed, it is," replied Merlin, sadly, "nor shall I again take the liberty of intruding my advice."

"I must dress at the Melvilles' for the evening," continued her young mistress, without appearing to hear what she said, "and you must go with me to assist me. You surely cannot object to look at the royal procession from the window? I shall tie a handkerchief over your eyes, dear Merlin," added she, trying to laugh, "if you think you shall be too much disgusted."

"Ah! my dear lady!" answered the latter, "how grieved I am that you, who are so sweet and amiable, should ever

have placed yourself in so perilous a situation !”

“Come, come; don’t be so grave,” said Julia, brushing away a tear. “What dress shall I wear? White, I suppose, with my pearls” (she had a very fine set of these, which had been left her by her mother). “Girolamo says,” continued she, “that his family diamonds require new setting before they can be fit for me to wear. They are at present locked up in the bank for security, but I shall see them when we go to Naples for the winter.”

The point of dress settled, Julia again joined the Cardinal, leaving poor Merlin more deeply distressed than she had been since the day her mistress had sealed her fate by a Neapolitan marriage.

The Marchese, after leaving Mrs. Melville at her own house, was proceeding on foot to a *café*, where he generally found Melville at the billiard-table, when, to his dismay, he met the servant of Hortense, who gave him a note, saying he was on his way with it to

Capodimonte, and that his mistress had returned to Naples that morning, and was then at Palazzo Landini.

Girolamo tore open the note, which informed him that a few days previous Hortense had received an offer from the manager of the La Scala theatre, at Milan, to perform there for a few months, which she had accepted, and should depart the ensuing week for that city, returning to Naples before the carnival to fulfil her engagement.

“Not if I have the power to prevent you,” said Girolamo to himself. “However, it is an immense relief that you are to be absent for the present.”

He then sent the servant with an apology to Melville, and hastened to his own palace, apprehensive of some new demand upon his purse from his insatiable amica.

She met him all smiles, however, as she bounded forward, making a *pirouette* to show him that her ankle was quite recovered; and he, of course, expressed the delight this gave him, which certainly was sincere, as it

ensured her being able to dance elsewhere, and would rid him of the perpetual *gêne* her being in Naples had caused him since his marriage.

"Thank you for coming to me so immediately, like a good boy," said she. "I hope madame votre femme will not scold you for leaving her so long. Any news from the papa yet ? Is he still sulky ?"

"I really have lost all hopes in that quarter," replied the Marchese, "and I am, as you may suppose, in great embarrassment. I know not what to do ; there is very little more I can obtain upon my Calabrian property, without giving it entirely up, and the interest these maledetti Ebrei (Jews) ask for money is something quite fearful."

"But you have fine jewels," said Hortense. "Why don't you dispose of them ?"

"They must be my last resource," returned Girolamo. "I shall keep them till the spring, to give one chance more that my father-in-law may relent."

"Surely you never intend to decorate your ugly wife with them ?" said the

danseuse. "She has not seen them yet, has she?"

"No," answered he. "I am sure I have already told you that they are at my banker's. I redeemed them just before my marriage at a great price, by the assistance of my aunt, the Duchessa di Merola, as I was then sanguine in the hope that old Bellfield's money would soon smooth all difficulties, but being disappointed in this, I dare not, even if I wished it, allow them to be seen upon my wife, as my creditors would immediately take possession of them. I have made the excuse to her that they are not wearable at present from their antique setting."

"Now, my dear Girolamo," said Hortense, in her most insinuating manner, "I have two parting favours to beg, which, I flatter myself, you will not refuse me. I have a great wish to appear in gran' gala to-morrow night at San' Carlo. I have got off dancing, as it is a new ballet, which, of course, I have not had time to practise, and I should so like to excite the envy of all my com-

panions by appearing in diamonds. Just let me have yours for this once. No one can suspect whose they are, as they will not be upon the Marchesa, so you can have no objections. You may come afterwards and sup with me, when you shall receive them all back in safety; and if you will put a cheque for 300 ducats in your pocket, that will settle some small debts I have, and also pay my travelling expenses to Milan."

Girolamo pressed his lips together, and ground his teeth, to prevent his breaking out into a furious passion at the unparelled insolence of these demands; cold drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead, but knowing he was in her power, he struggled to restrain himself, and said calmly—

"My dear Hortense, you have ever found me ready to gratify you; the money you shall have at whatever cost, but as for the diamonds, I entreat you to excuse me. Some of them are of a very peculiar shape, and there are many old friends of my family who know them well, and they would not fail to recognise them. Our *liaison*, you are aware,

is no secret in Naples, and as unluckily my wife intends going to San' Carlo to-morrow night, she might hear your whole history from some of the Neapolitan ladies, who delight in making mischief, and would never allow so good an opportunity of doing so to escape them; and then what a fine story it would be to send to England to assist in putting old Bellfield in good humour!"

"So many words are unnecessary," said Hortense, rising. "I have already told you that your fears are most groundless; but do as you please, only say yes or no at once, and I shall take my measures accordingly."

She then rang the bell and ordered her carriage (Girolamo standing before her the image of rage and despair), and leaving the room, she added—

"You will have decided by the time I have put on my bonnet."

The Marchese when left alone revolved in bitter wrath the matter over in his mind, and found he had indeed no alternative, for he knew well that if he refused compliance there was no vengeance this unprincipled

woman would not take. He therefore thought he must trust to chance, which had so often befriended him, and ere Hortense returned he had composed his countenance, and looking all love and tenderness, as he raised the hand of his mistress to his lips, he exclaimed—

“How could I ever doubt you managing well any affair you undertook, *ma chère*? I shall go instantly and bring you the jewels, and, as you propose, I shall come to you for them after the theatre. I shall endeavour to send the Marchesa home before the ballet is concluded. You will not of course expect me in your box, as that might be remarked by her, or the English party she will be with, but I shall be here the moment I can leave them.”

“I knew you would soon come to your senses,” said Hortense, laughing and tapping him on the head. “Come, hand me to the carriage; I have much shopping to do, as this is my last day here.”

So saying she called her maid, and Girolamo, having bid her adieu, most reluctantly

went about his unpleasant commission. On his return to Capodimonte, Julia came running to meet him, saying—

“Look what your dear uncle has just given me,” showing him at the same time an order for one thousand ducats. “He kindly apologized for not having brought me any marriage gift, but says he is sure I shall know much better than he does how to choose a *cadeau* for myself; he has therefore given me this sum of money for that purpose. He advised me not to let you know of it. Poor cardinal! he has never had a wife, and has no idea of the perfect confidence that subsists between a *sposa* and her husband. I made no promise, however, to follow his advice; and now, dear Girolamo, you must accept half of it. You have so many uses for money, and I feel so often that I came to you a portionless bride, it is quite a delight to me to have a trifle I can offer you.”

The hardened heart of the worthless husband felt only joy at having been extricated from his present difficulties by the unexpected generosity of the wife he was so

grossly wronging; but the unsuspecting Julia believed that his handsome countenance beamed with love and gratitude, as he poured forth his acknowledgments, to which he added that it might perhaps be better not to mention to the cardinal that she had shared his present with him, as the former had advised her against doing so, to which Julia readily agreed, and the remainder of the day was spent in the greatest harmony. The following morning (the day of the fête) the Marchese and Marchesa, accompanied by the reluctant Merlin, repaired at an early hour to the Melvilles' house, where they found a numerous party assembled. The day was bright and beautiful, as the month of September always is at Naples, and the festa itself, with the assembled crowds, was much more imposing and picturesque than it has been of late years.

The Neapolitans themselves all remark how much their fêtes are falling off, owing to the increasing poverty of both the higher and lower ranks, the former not being able to make the same display, or the latter to

come from a great distance to assist at them. On the day I now speak of, however, there was an abundant population from every part of the kingdom, and so great was the variety of costume and brilliancy of colour among the dresses of the Contadini, that the Villa Reale might be compared to a rich *parterre*, adorned with beds of tulips and every other species of flower. The scene being quite a novel one to Julia she was delighted with it, and was so entirely absorbed in gazing, she was quite unconscious of the great admiration her own uncommon loveliness excited, as she hung over the balcony of the window.

It was nearly seven in the evening before all was over, and the whole party repaired to the theatre; but the Marchese seized an opportunity of whispering to Julia as they were leaving the Melvilles' house—

“I know, I feel, dearest, that you are making a great sacrifice to gratify me this evening, but I must not abuse your kindness and allow you to fatigue yourself too much. The Melvilles wish us to return to sup with them, but, to avoid your being obliged

to do that, desire Merlin to come for you at any hour you please. You can say you are tired ; and I shall see you safe to the carriage, and then rejoin the party, not to appear unpolite."

"How kind and considerate you are, my Girolamo !" said Julia, pressing his hand. "If you think I may leave before the ballet begins, I shall be very glad. Another night I shall stay as late as you like ; but this day's excitement has really fatigued me."

The Melvilles' box was on the first row. Julia, Mrs. Melville, and a Neapolitan contessa occupied the three front seats, the gentlemen, as usual, standing or sitting behind. The house was full to overflowing, and Julia was soon weary of the glare of the lights, and of seeing herself the object of general attention, all the opera-glasses being directed towards her, as it was the first time she had been seen on a public occasion. She would gladly have retired behind, and begged Girolamo to take her place, but this Mrs. Melville would not permit ; and the Marchese had still less inclination to oblige her,

for, looking up as he bent forward to answer his wife, he perceived Hortense, in all the blaze of a very handsome dress and decorated with his diamonds, in a box exactly opposite to them on the second row. Her eyes were immediately attracted to the party the moment she caught a glimpse of Girolamo, and she fixed her basilisk gaze so pointedly upon Julia, that the latter was quite annoyed by it; and, turning to the young Duca di Mola, who stood by her, she asked if he knew who that bold-looking woman was who stared so hard into their box.

"It is Hortense, one of the best *danseuses* we have had here this season," replied he, looking significantly at Girolamo as he spoke. "She has been lame and not able to dance for some time, but I hear she is recovered, and is now going to leave Naples for some other engagement."

"What magnificent diamonds she wears!" said Mrs. Melville. "They cannot surely be her own," added she, addressing Girolamo, who, as may be well imagined, suffered martyrdom under the interrogation; but,

making a careless reply, he soon succeeded in drawing her attention to some other object.

A little time after Mrs. Melville proposed to Julia to pay some visits on the opposite side of the house, and Girolamo, having left Julia in a box exactly below that of Hortense, took the opportunity of going to the latter for a moment, when, as he expected, she directly asked him which of the ladies was his wife. Gladly would he have tried to deceive her by naming Mrs. Melville, but he feared she might already have found out the truth from some of the Neapolitans who crowded her box, and such an attempt on his part would only have rendered her still more furious. So, with as much coolness as he could command, he described the Marchesa as the youngest of the ladies who were with him.

"She might well spare me her diamonds," said she, maliciously, determined to be revenged upon Girolamo for having represented his wife to her as a complete fright. "Her pearls are very handsome. Do you think they would become me?" continued she,

turning to the other young men who were laughing at her impudence and the Marchese's confused looks. "Perhaps she may lend them to me for the next gala, while she takes the diamonds. Time about is fair play, you know. Eh, Marchese?"

Girolamo would willingly have annihilated her on the spot, but he dared not exasperate her further; and therefore he heard her remarks in silence, and, promising to join her at supper, he returned to Julia, as the ballet was about to commence. And she, who had been thoroughly unhappy all the evening (neither the remembrance of the Cardinal's specious arguments nor the example of Mrs. Melville having been able to drown the voice of conscience, which loudly told her she was breaking the Sabbath), eagerly begged he would call the carriage, which Giovanni came up a moment after to announce; and the Marchese, having placed her in it, telling her not to sit up for him, returned to Mrs. Melville's box.

It was, fortunately, too dark for Julia to remark the extreme paleness of poor Merlin's

face, or to observe the state of agitation she was in, for she with difficulty could conceal it, as she felt ready to faint. And it must here be explained that, when she arrived at San' Carlo, Giovanni had advised her getting out and remaining in the lobby till her mistress came, as the carriage would not be permitted to stand before the door, and she might not like driving off alone through the crowd, he being obliged to be in readiness to let his master know it was arrived. Merlin, who quite relied upon Giovanni, having found him invariably kind and respectful to her, agreed to remain near him ; and, having procured her a chair, he went to inquire if the ballet had commenced, when the Duca di Lecca and the Principe Azzolini, two young men she had often seen with the Marchese at Capodimonte, came down the stairs, and, as they were detained by the crowd exactly in front of her, she could not avoid hearing their conversation, which immediately attracted her attention from their naming her mistress.

“How very lovely the Marchesa Landini

looks to-night!" said the Duca. "I have never seen any foreigner, I think, so beautiful; and she is as innocent and unsuspicious as a child, and looks so fondly at that scellerato (villain) of a husband of hers. What a pity she ever fell to his lot! and how can he prefer that *passée*, disgusting Hortense to her? Did you observe how the latter was bedecked with jewels? and will you believe me when I tell you that these very diamonds are the Marchese's, and should have been worn by his bellissima moglie (beautiful wife) to-night? I recognised the splendid ruby clasp of the necklace, which I have often seen upon the old Marchesa, and I went to Hortense's box on purpose to assure myself I was right, which her own words soon confirmed, as she had the assurance to insult Girolamo himself, by calling every one's attention to the jewels as being his."

"Zitto! parlate più piano!" (hush! speak lower!) whispered the Principe. "The Marchesa's cameriera is close to us;" and with these words they moved on. But

poor Merlin had heard enough ; she became like a statue, and remained like one stupefied till Giovanni returned, who, seeing she was as pale as death, offered to get her a glass of water.

“Oh ! no, no !” said she. “Pray do not leave me, good Giovanni, but take me away as soon as possible. I am justly punished for ever having put my foot even in the lobby of a theatre on the Lord’s-day !”

At that moment a servant touched her elbow, saying—

“You are the cameriera of the Marchesa Landini, are you not ?” And, upon her replying in the affirmative, he slipped a note into her hand, adding, “then my mistress sends this to yours, with her best compliments, but she begs you will not give it to her till you reach home.” So saying, he disappeared, and Giovanni hastily said—

“Madama, you must not give that note to your poor, dear lady. I know the hand, and who has sent it. E una diavola incarnata (she is an incarnate devil), and she only can have done it to make mischief.

I believe you to be most sincerely attached to your mistress, and my advice to you is to open this paper, which is not sealed. You do not understand French (in which this woman always writes), but I will translate it for you, and you can judge for yourself if it is fit for the Marchesa's eyes."

The conversation Merlin had just overheard made her not hesitate to follow Giovanni's counsel. She therefore gave the note instantly into his hand. It was written with a pencil, and contained these words—

"J'espère, belle Marquise, que vous étiez contente de ma parure ce soir. Tout le monde dit que vos diamants me vont à merveille; et quand j'aurai envie de porter vos belles perles, je n'ai qu'à dire un mot à mon ami votre mari, et il me les enverra sur le champ.

"HORTENSE."

"Never, never!" said the greatly shocked Merlin, "shall this infamous scrawl be

beheld by my dear, innocent lady"—putting it immediately into her pocket, and turning to Giovanni for an explanation. But he begged she would compose herself, and wait till he should have an opportunity of speaking to her in private, as he must then go in search of his master, who, as we have seen, joined them a few minutes after with Julia.

"I hope I have not kept you waiting long, dear Merlin," said the latter, as they drove off. "I am so tired, and my head aches so much. I did so long to quit that odious theatre, where I fervently wish," murmured she, as she leant her burning temples on her maid's shoulder, "that I had never allowed myself to be persuaded to go."

Merlin took no further notice of her speech than to beg she would not fatigue herself by talking, and they reached home in silence.

Julia went immediately to bed. As soon as Merlin had arranged everything comfortably for her, she called Giovanni into the dining-room, and, shutting the door, she

requested he would now tell her the meaning of what he had said at the door of the theatre.

“You need not be afraid, madama,” said he, observing Merlin’s precaution of closing the door. “We have, grazie a Dio! (thank God!) no spies here. It will be different when we go to Naples and have that bir-bone, Don Riccardo, over our heads. But in regard to what you want to know, I can only tell you that my master is unworthy of being the husband of such an angela as the Marchesa, and I have all along feared that if that Mademoiselle Hortense got a glimpse of her, she would be so jealous of her beauty, there is no revenge she would not take upon her. However, I hear she leaves Naples for Milan to-morrow, where she will remain several months, and I hope some lucky chance may either prevent her from returning, or give her a new lover before the winter; therefore, my opinion is that it will be the most prudent plan to say nothing to your lady at present. She will find out her husband’s wickedness soon

enough, and the belief that all is unknown to her keeps him now under a degree of restraint. I scarcely think that Hortense will write again, but I shall keep a strict watch, and you can do the same, to prevent any letter being given to the Marchesa without our knowledge. You may trust me, Madama Merlin," continued he, "though I am a Neapolitan. Believe me, there are good and bad in all countries, and you will find me ready to assist you in every way in my power, only do not talk much to me before the other servants, or appear to have any intimacy with me, as Don Riccardo might hear of it, and then I should immediately be turned away."

Merlin thanked Giovanni warmly for his advice, and promising to follow it exactly, they separated for the night.

Meanwhile, the Marchese, very much out of temper, took his way to Hortense's lodgings, fully expecting a torrent of reproaches and abuse for his not having told her the truth about Julia, and it was a most agreeable surprise to him to find her all

smiles and good humour. Having gratified her spite by sending the note to his wife, she thought it would be as well to part with Girolamo in peace, particularly as she had yet to receive the sum of money she had demanded of him.

"Votre Marquise n'est pas mal," said she as soon as he entered. "She is better looking than I expected ; but she appears '*una merluzza insipida*,' (an insipid whiting) as you Neapolitans say, whose society cannot be very entertaining, and I pity you, *mon ami*, for having made so bad a *negozio* of your marriage. While there is life there is hope," continued she, "and you will be sure to write to me if you have any good news from England."

"I think I shall!" said Girolamo, aside ; but of course he promised compliance, and, having presented her with the three hundred ducats, he bade her farewell, and returned to Capodimonte.

Julia had been so much fatigued and excited that she felt quite unwell on the following morning, and for several days she was confined to her room, when she could not

but observe how much her husband seemed bored to remain with her, although he expressed great concern at her indisposition. But when a woman truly loves, she is very quick in distinguishing words that really come from the heart, from those which are merely uttered by the lips. She therefore insisted upon his accepting the Melvilles' invitations as usual, which, after a very faint refusal, he was very glad to do.

This poor Neapolitan wife began now to feel that she had been mistaken in the degree of her own love for the Marchese. It was more her romantic fancy that had been captivated than her affections. She had determined to believe that he was the amiable and domestic character she wished him to be, because his fine black eyes looked "unutterable things," and his assent was ready to every opinion she expressed; but the experience of a few short months had shown her that never were two beings more completely dissimilar, and she looked in vain for the congeniality which she had flattered herself would soften every care, and enable her

to bear up against every misfortune. "If I had only opened my heart to dearest Harriet," said she, while she secretly shed many bitter tears, "this misery would never have been mine, and I might have learnt to love Mordaunt, who was in every way so superior and so fitted to make me happy. But it is too late to repent now; I must make the best of my lot. I am thankful that neither my dearest papa nor sister knows what I suffer; it would add to my unhappiness to think that they did. As to Mordaunt," added she, with a sigh, "I cannot suppose he still feels any interest in me."

Julia did not, however, communicate these *triste* reflections to Merlin, but, endeavouring to banish them from her mind, she appeared in very good spirits on the return of the Cardinal; and Girolamo was quite unconscious of any change having taken place in her feelings towards him.

The first Sunday she was able to go out, the Cardinal proposed that she should accompany him and his nephew to the Church of Santo Spirito to hear a sermon, to which

she readily agreed, as there was no longer any service at the English minister's, and there being then no Protestant church in Naples.

"We had better take your cameriera also," said his Eminence ; "there is quite room enough for her in the carriage."

"I do not think she understands Italian sufficiently to profit by what she would hear," said Julia, foreseeing that nothing would induce Merlin to go. But the Marchese, who hated the latter, and hoped to vex her by obliging her to accompany her mistress, went to call her to attend her.

Merlin, however, as might be expected, was not to be moved by his invitation. She coldly thanked him, saying, "My lady cannot want my attendance in a Roman Catholic place of worship ; nor will she, I am persuaded, ever ask me to enter one, whatever she may do herself."

Julia coloured, but remained silent, and, as they went downstairs, the Cardinal whispered to his nephew, "You must get quit of

that woman, or she will ruin all our plans ;” and the carriage drove off with the trio.

The sermon was a very eloquent moral discourse, and Julia was much pleased to find that she had not to listen to any doctrines she must disapprove of. The preacher was a particular friend of the Cardinal’s, and the latter had privately requested he would avoid all points likely to alarm or offend a Protestant, which the priest had carefully attended to, and Julia warmly expressed her admiration of his language.

“Let me present him to you,” said the Cardinal. “You will be as much pleased with him in private society as in the pulpit. He is a very dear friend of mine, which, I hope, will also be a recommendation to you.”

The introduction accordingly took place, and Don Gasparo was most graciously received by Julia, the Marchese inviting him to visit them whenever his avocations would permit him. And, when the party returned home, Julia flew to Merlin to tell her how much she had been delighted.

"I assure you," said she, "there was not a word of Roman Catholicism. It was a thousand times better than any I have heard in English since I left home, and I shall certainly go to hear Don Gasparò very often while I cannot attend our own service."

"And while I have a Bible I can read," replied Merlin, "I shall think I am employing my time much more profitably by studying it than in listening to an artful discourse got up in order to deceive and lure me on to my destruction."

And Julia, seeing she was quite fixed in her opinion, let the subject drop.

The villeggeatura now came on, and as the opera is always very indifferent at that season, except when an occasional royal birthday occurs, Julia was spared any requests to go there of a Sunday, which she had secretly determined she never would do again ; but, unconsciously to herself, she was daily becoming more inclined towards the Roman Catholic religion, in consequence of her growing intimacy with Don Gasparò, who, possessing great abilities and infinite

tact, knew well how to begin the work of leading so unsuspecting and innocent a character as hers imperceptibly away from the true faith, and by degrees the Cardinal and he used to take up the subject of the two religions before her, as if they were not aware of her presence, the Cardinal remarking upon many of the principal objections made by Protestants on several leading points, and Don Gasparo answering them in the most skilful and plausible manner, and doing away to all appearance the real difference, by declaring that if Protestants were but to give themselves the trouble of investigation, without prejudice, they could not fail to see their errors; and poor Julia, who had now few pleasant ideas to occupy her mind with, felt happier in the excitement this employment gave her, and she never was in greater danger than at the moment she fancied herself the most secure, and laid herself open to the insidious lessons of these cunning priests.

About the end of October the Cardinal was obliged once more to return to Rome,

which Julia sincerely regretted ; she had found him so very friendly and affectionate to her, and she dreaded being left alone with Girolamo, whose temper she perceived was evidently under restraint before his uncle, as well as his manner towards herself.

“What shall I do without you, my dear uncle ?” said she. “You have been my consolation and my good counsellor on all occasions, and I feel that I shall be quite unhappy when you are gone !”

“I leave you a better adviser than I am, dearest Julia, in Don Gasparo,” replied his eminence. “You may safely confide all your troubles to him, as you would to me, and be sure of receiving the soundest advice. Ah ! my dear child ! the more I have seen of you and of the patience with which you bear the inequalities of your husband’s temper and his follies in various ways, I must own to you how much I grieve that you are not of our religion by profession—for I am sure you are so in heart—as, if you were so, there are innumerable consolations

you would receive, which at present cannot reach you."

Julia started. This was the first time the Cardinal had ever spoken so openly to her, but he turned off the subject without waiting for a reply, by begging she would keep up a regular correspondence with him, and the following day he left Naples, Girolamo accompanying him as far as Capua to receive his last instructions.

"I leave your wife in good hands," said he. "The work is more than half accomplished, if you will only study her comfort a little more and pay her some attention. You are the most incorrigible of *roués*. Why can you not put on the semblance at least of affection for this stupid girl, until she has changed her religion and you have got her money in your power? Then you can do as you like; but you seem wilfully blind to your own interest. Why do you not devise some pretext for sending away Merlin? I tell you I dread that woman's influence over her mistress more than any other impediment."

"It is quite impossible that I can discharge her," answered Girolamo, "Not that I should mind what Julia might say, but I know that Merlin would represent me in such colours to the Bellfields, I should be done up for ever with them, and the father would be quite capable (even if he did relent in favour of my wife) to make an independent settlement upon Julia, over which I should have no command; so I dare do nothing at present."

"Well, well," returned the Cardinal, "we must trust to Don Gasparo and to what you will exert yourself to do in order to obtain the assistance I have promised you; but if you fail it will certainly be your own fault, and I once more warn you that you may expect nothing from me."

Girolamo promised to be as complacent as he could, and the worthy relatives separated with many expressions of regard, which were equally sincere on both sides.

The season for remaining in Villegeatura being now over, the Marchese and Julia prepared to take up their residence in Naples

for the winter. Girolamo, for a little time after the Cardinal's departure, continued to behave tolerably well, and though Julia could no longer be deceived by a few kind words to believe that he really had the love for her she once flattered herself was sincere, still she was thankful to see him in good humour, and readily accepted all his apologies for not having been able to put his palace in the state he could have wished for her, owing to the losses he always pretended to have sustained by his agent's misconduct, but promising that in the spring all should be properly arranged.

In the mean time Merlin did her best, by spending a part of the Cardinal's present to her mistress in purchasing a carpet for her bedroom and a small sitting-room adjoining, with a few other articles of furniture necessary, to make them tolerably comfortable.

The Marchese being absent from town for a week with Mr. Melville, Julia hoped to surprise him on his return by showing how English she had made them. She therefore said nothing to him of her intentions, and

gave Merlin the money to pay for all before his return.

She then left the villa and went to Naples to Palazzo Landini, to be in readiness to receive her husband, endeavouring to feel as happy as she once hoped she should be on entering her own house ; but it was a dark and gloomy day, quite unlike the usual Neapolitan weather, which seemed to presage misfortune, and she felt a chill on passing up the cold stairs and through the large, empty rooms, to reach her own little apartment. She shrank also from the forbidding looks of the maestro di casa, and feeling she had no one to welcome her, she could not help shedding tears when alone with Merlin, but, quickly drying them, she listened anxiously for every carriage, refusing to dine till the Marchese arrived.

It was not till very late that he made his appearance, and his face expressed the extreme of bad temper. Instead of apologising to Julia for having kept her waiting, he only said—

“ How foolish of you not to go to dinner.

I dined with Melville; we arrived just as Mrs. Melville was sitting down to table. They have got a Dr. Montague with them, who was one of Melville's guardians; he looks an old viper, and I dare say will do all he can to get his pupil under his command again. But what have you been doing here?" continued he, looking round with a very displeased countenance at the new furniture in the room. "I wish you had deigned to inform me before you went to all this unnecessary expense, as I should have told you that if you wished for English roba, you must write to your father to pay for it; I have not a sous at present."

Julia felt as if her heart would break at this unfeeling speech, which destroyed her last hope of pleasing her most selfish husband, but with a tremulous voice she replied—

"I have only laid out part of the money which your uncle desired me to spend on trinkets, Girolamo, to furnish my two rooms decently, and I hoped you would be glad to see me comfortable. The bills are all paid, so you need not fear my being in debt."

"Then you have only committed a still greater bestialità" (act of folly), said he, in a passion; "there was no occasion to pay instantly for what you got; the money would have been most useful to me, and I was just going to ask you to lend it to me; but I suppose you prefer allowing your husband to be at the mercy of Jews for what he requires."

"Oh, do not kill me with such harsh words, Girolamo," said the now weeping Julia. "I have still two hundred ducats, I only spent three hundred upon the furniture; you are most welcome to it. I shall go and ask Merlin for it immediately," and running into the next room, she found the latter there, who (the door being open) had overheard all the conversation. "Pray give me the two hundred ducats you have," said her mistress; "your master wants it."

"If you mean the two hundred ducats you gave me the charge of, ma'am," said Merlin, quietly, "I can only give you one hundred. You remember I have not had my wages paid for eight months, and I

required some money to get winter clothing for myself, so I have appropriated this sum (one hundred ducats) for this purpose. I knew you would not be angry, and I thought you had forgot to pay me."

"This is insolence unparalleled," cried the Marchese, in great wrath. "Julia, do you sanction your maid's making use of your money without your permission? Take care, Mrs. Merlin; I have a great mind to send you back to England by the first opportunity."

"I do not think," answered Merlin, calmly, "that you would find it convenient at present to put yourself to such an expense as that of paying my journey, which you are aware you would be obliged to do. The Marchesa knows," continued she, scarcely able to contain her indignation, "that I would not offend her for worlds, but she before desired me to take whatever money I wanted when it suited me, and she did not know I had done so, or she would not have asked me for it."

Merlin then brought the hundred ducats,

which she placed before Julia, and retired without speaking.

Girolamo now feared he had gone rather too far, as he saw his wife was ready to faint during his altercation with Merlin ; he therefore attempted to make some sort of apology, by saying he had had many things to annoy him, and that the irritation caused by seeing that Julia had been obliged to do for herself what he ought to have done for her, had made him speak unkindly.

“ But you will forgive me, mon amie, and think no more of it,” said he, taking her hand.

“ I feel more surprised and grieved than angry,” replied Julia, withdrawing her hand ; “ but let us not again allude to the subject. Pray put away the money. Don Gasparo will be here presently, and he must not see that we have been quarrelling,” added she, forcing a smile.

The priest soon after came in, which Julia felt a relief, as it prevented her having a long *tête-à-tête* with her husband, and the evening at length concluded.

When alone with Merlin, she carefully avoided making a single remark upon what had passed ; she felt hurt at the latter's refusing to give up the money, and was quite at a loss how to account for her conduct—she had hitherto found her so perfectly disinterested. “ Can I have been deceived in her also ? ” said she mentally, but the thought was only momentary ; Merlin was if possible more affectionately attentive than ever, and although she was equally silent upon the subject, her young mistress felt assured she must have acted from some secret motive, which in time she would give a satisfactory explanation of. The following morning, Mrs. Melville having called to ask Julia to drive with her, Merlin thought she would take the opportunity of going to Mr. Wilson, the banker, to place in his hands the half of the sum she had retained.

“ I do not like to keep so much money in the house,” said she to herself. “ Don Riccardo looks like a thief, who would not scruple to take whatever he could lay his hands upon.” She therefore begged Gio-

vanni to accompany her, as she was sure he would not name where they had been, and they accordingly proceeded to the Largo Castello, where the banker lived. To her inquiries if the latter had received any news of the Bellfields, he replied that his partner in London had mentioned the increasing illness of Miss Bellfield, and that the physicians had scarcely any hopes of her recovery. They had again recommended her returning to Italy, but as she could not be prevailed upon to do that, she had been ordered to Torquay, where her father and she were then settled.

“ Ah, poor dear Miss Harriet !” said Merlin. “ Her heart is broken at being separated from her sister. What would be her feelings did she know all ?”

Merlin returned home with a heavy heart. On entering they were met by the maestro di casa, who angrily inquired of Giovanni where he had been so long.

“ I knew my master would not require me,” replied the latter. “ Mrs. Merlin had some

commissions to do for her lady, and I went to show her the way."

"Madama Merlin must find another attendant," said Riccardo, surlily; "we do not keep servants for the cameriera in this house."

Merlin walked upstairs without taking any notice of this impertinent speech; and so entirely was she engrossed by her own melancholy thoughts, that she mistook the first for the second floor; and the door being open, she walked in, without being aware of her mistake until she reached the first sitting-room, where a middle-aged lady of respectable appearance was seated beside a pale, delicate-looking young man, who was reclining on the sofa.

The lady rose with a look of surprise as Merlin entered, and addressed her in very good English, but with a foreign accent, begging to know what she wanted. Great was Merlin's confusion, but she quickly apologised for her intrusion, and informed the lady that she lived in the piano above her.

“Oh, you are the maid of that lovely young Marchesa !” said she. “How I have longed to be acquainted with your mistress, as she is English, and I have many kind friends in her native land ; but I did not venture to intrude, not having any introduction to her.”

Merlin was delighted to hear her own language again, and charmed with the gentle manners of the lady, who informed her she was a German, and had come into Italy for the health of her son, a Protestant clergyman, who had injured his health by intense study while at college.

“But he is now, thank God, much better,” said she, “and we hope to return home early in the spring. Your mistress is, I have heard, a Protestant. If she and you will join our prayers on Sunday, as there is now no service at your minister’s, we shall be very happy to see you, and Albert shall read one of his sermons to you.”

Merlin gratefully thanked Madame Renzil (for so the lady was called), and said she would convey the message to her lady, and

return with the answer, wondering within herself if Julia would be permitted by the Marchese to accept of the invitation.

When the former returned from her drive, Merlin immediately told her of the new acquaintance she had made; but Julia did not seem so much pleased with the idea as she expected, feeling sure that Girolamo would not approve of her attending service there. Besides that, without being aware of it herself, she was now so much fascinated by the eloquence of Don Gasparo, she desired to hear no other sermons than his.

"You must make my compliments to Madame Renzil," said she, "and thank her very much for her kind offer, which, if in my power, I shall perhaps at some time avail myself of. But you can explain my situation to her, dear Merlin: that I am not my own mistress, and that unless my husband approves I dare not promise anything."

Merlin sighed, but said she would carry the message, which Madame Renzil received with great regret.

“Alas !” said she, “that so sweet a young creature should have given a Roman Catholic and an Italian the right to control her on so important a point ! But assure her that, come when she will, we shall ever be ready to welcome her.”

The next Sunday Merlin joined the mother and son at prayers, and returned much delighted with the sermon of young Renzil ; but Julia listened rather impatiently to her encomiums of it, as she felt she was wrong in not having at least made an attempt to obtain the Marchese’s permission to have been there also ; but she soon after went to the church of Don Gasparo, accompanied by Giovanni.

The service had not commenced, and the latter went forward to procure a chair for his mistress, when, behind one of the pillars near the altar, he observed Riccardo beckon to Don Gasparo, who immediately joined him, and they went into a dark corner together. Giovanni, who suspected mischief, hastily slipped behind one of the pillars, and heard Riccardo say—

"The cameriera has found out the Protestant family below stairs, and this morning she has been at prayers with them."

"The Marchesa has not yet visited them, I hope?" said Gasparo, eagerly.

"Non, signore," answered Riccardo; "and I wished to give you instant warning, in order that you may prevent her doing so."

"It is enough," said the priest. "But she is now here; so do not let us be seen together."

And Giovanni had just time to make his escape before Riccardo turned round and moved away. When he returned home, Giovanni related to Merlin what he had overheard, adding that he feared she would soon receive an order from his master that she was not to have any communication with the Benzils. But Merlin was more distressed and uneasy about the deep-laid plot which it was evident was formed against her mistress, and she was in the greatest perplexity whether or not she ought to inform her of it. Badly as she thought of the Marchese, she was still unwilling, without some urgent

cause, to open Julia's eyes, and render her more unhappy than she already was. She therefore determined to consult Madame Benzil on the subject at her next visit. But that very evening Riccardo, with a malicious grin of satisfaction on his countenance, came to desire she would go to his master, whom she found alone, and, as she anticipated, he told her that he had been informed of the new acquaintances she had made, and that he desired she would never go there again, as he did not permit his servants to make intimacies with any foreign lodgers who might be in his house. A visitor coming in before he had finished his harangue, Merlin gladly retreated before she had been obliged to give any promise on the subject.

In the mean time the days passed very heavily with poor Julia ; she had no English acquaintance but Mrs. Melville, whom, though good-humoured and obliging (as we have already said), she could make no friend of, and all the ladies of the country whom she had met were still less congenial to her. Of her husband she saw but little, and when they

met, he was generally in bad humour, complaining of poverty, and abusing Mr. Bellfield for his continued silence. They had now no box at San' Carlo, as Girolamo said he could not afford it, and Julia seldom accepted any invitation to go there, for she could not raise her spirits sufficiently to be entertained by the trifling conversation of the Neapolitan ladies, and she felt she had no protection from the compliments and admiration of the gentlemen, as Girolamo always left her to go and play the agreeable in some other box. She had been firm in refusing to go to the theatre again on Sunday, and the Marchese saw that it would be impossible at present to shake her determination, so he forbore to urge her, trusting that when Don Gasparo had succeeded in making her change her religion, it would be very easy to conquer what he called her remaining scruples. He never attempted talking to her in favour of his religion himself, being aware that he was too indifferent to be eloquent on the subject; the hope of his uncle's bribe alone made him take an interest in the affair, and he began

to feel impatient at the slow progress Don Gasparo appeared to be making in it.

His creditors had for some time been clamorous to have at least a part of their money, and he had found himself obliged to dispose of his diamonds for this purpose soon after his return to Naples for the winter. This he concealed from Julia ; but as he never alluded to the jewels he had promised to have reset for her, she suspected the truth, and unhappy as she was from other causes, the circumstance was perfectly indifferent to her. The sum obtained for these diamonds was considerable, and Girolamo, having stopped the mouths of his most impatient creditors with the half of it, carried the remainder to the gaming table, which had always been his passion, and in Melville he at first found a rich harvest ; but since the arrival of Dr. Montague, it became a more difficult task, as that gentleman, being aware how weak and easy led his pupil was, kept a strict watch upon the Marchese and some of his gambling associates. Dr. Montague was the only person whom Julia always met with pleasure

at the Melvilles'. He was a most benevolent-looking old man, and his conversation was sensible and intelligent ; he seemed from the first as much pleased with her, as he disliked the Marchese, for he soon perceived that the latter was unkind to his wife—her looks, in spite of all her efforts, betraying her unhappiness—and, observing her patient sweetness, Dr. Montague became deeply interested in her. He frequently called on her when he knew her husband was from home, and they soon became very intimate. For the first time since she left her father's roof, Julia felt she had a real friend, on whose judgment and advice she might safely rely ; she had been pleased and grateful for the cardinal's seeming kindness and affection, but there was rather too much flattery, both in his looks and words (however delicately it was administered), to allow her to be quite at her ease with him : something sounded hollow, although she could not exactly say what ; and ever since their last conversation, when he so openly alluded to her becoming a Roman Catholic, her confidence in him had

declined. With Don Gasparo her imagination was dazzled ; and so consummate was his art, that she had not as yet the slightest suspicion that he had any secret design in courting her society.

Still she regarded him more with admiration of his talents than with feelings of friendship, and she was shy of entering much into conversation with him, fearing he might engage her in some controversy, in which she should not easily find words to answer him. But with Dr. Montague it was totally different, and she was often at a loss to account for the irresistible attraction which seemed to draw her to him.

“ He is so kind-hearted and good-humoured, like my own dear papa, and also,” said she to herself, “ he certainly has a very strong resemblance to poor Mordaunt. I wonder if they are related ; I shall ask him the next time he comes,” which she accordingly did, and found her presentiment correct, as Dr. Montague was his (Mordaunt’s) uncle. He had been travelling in the East for a year, as a relaxation from his clerical

duties, after a severe illness ; he had therefore not seen his nephew since the latter had been in Naples, but he appeared fondly attached to him, and not being aware of any attachment having existed on Mordaunt's part towards Julia, he spoke in the warmest terms of him, only regretting that for some time his letters had been so *triste*, he feared his health must be affected, though he would not allow that that was the case.

"What did you think of him, dear Marchesa?" continued he. "He wrote as if he was enchanted with Naples during the first part of the winter, but he quitted it at last in such haste, saying he was so anxious to get back to England, I have sometimes suspected there must have been an *affaire du cœur* at the bottom of all ; and yet so fine a young man as he is, with his advantages of person and fortune, was not likely to sigh in vain."

Julia's rosy blush, which immediately faded into a marble paleness, surprised the good doctor ; but her confused manner of answering his questions made him soon

guess the truth ; and, with the frankness natural to him, he abruptly said—

“ Well, now, I should have liked you for a niece ! How could you prefer a Neapolitan to my dear Charles ? But forgive me,” said he, kindly, taking her trembling hand. “ There is no accounting for difference of taste ; and, of course, I must be partial.”

Julia endeavoured to rally her spirits, and pay the just tribute to Mordaunt’s merits, by speaking most highly in his praise. And from that hour might be dated the absence of all reserve between herself and Dr. Montague ; and in a very short time she laid her heart entirely open to him, and told him all the story of her love, her marriage, and her father’s displeasure. She did not think herself at liberty to mention what had passed between Mordaunt and her, from delicacy to the former ; but Dr. Montague understood it all, and forbore to interrogate her on the subject. When she came to talk of the Cardinal and Don Gasparo, she felt very much embarrassed, particularly with regard to the latter, as she was ashamed to own the

influence he had had over her, in inducing her to attend his church so constantly; but the feeling was momentary. "I ought to have no concealments from this kind friend," thought she; and, without further hesitation, she candidly informed him of the progress of her intimacy with the priest, and how imperceptibly she had been fascinated by his eloquence and his art, even to the degree of preferring to listen to his sermons to availing herself of the opportunity of attending her own service at the Renzils'.

Dr. Montague heard her with great attention, and then gently said—

"You have greatly erred, my dear young friend, and have, by too great confidence in your own steadiness, brought yourself into a situation of the utmost danger to your everlasting welfare. The result has proved to you how unfit we are to stand in our own strength; and you can never be grateful enough to that God by whose gracious assistance you have (ere it was too late) discovered the wiles of these cunning priests.

What misery you were unconsciously preparing for yourself ! Where would you have found consolation and support under all your distresses, had you yielded to the temptation, and forsaken the true faith ?”

Julia, sobbing as if her heart would break, assured Dr. Montague that her eyes were now fully opened to the great sin she had committed, and for which she should never forgive herself.

“Alas !” said she, “I was too careless and indifferent on the subject, or I should not so easily have been the tool of that man. My first fault was my disobedience to my dear father. Had my religious principles been properly fixed, I never would have failed in duty to my parent, and thus have rushed headlong upon misery for life. Pray for me, dear Dr. Montague, as if I were indeed your niece, to the Lord, who is ever ready to pardon us if we are sincere in our repentance ! You may congratulate yourself, after hearing my sad history, that your amiable nephew has escaped a union with one every way so unworthy of him.”

The good doctor was much affected by the deep sorrow and contrition expressed by this interesting girl, whom he now tried to comfort by the hope that all would be forgiven if she continued to pray for God's Holy Spirit to enable her to keep steady in her present good resolutions. He promised to visit her frequently, and to bring her books which he thought would assist her endeavours. He also recommended her immediately cultivating the acquaintance of Mons. and Madame Renzil, whom he knew and valued as excellent people. This, Julia said, she feared would be another cause of ill-treatment from the Marchese, as she had heard of his prohibition to Merlin; but she added that she would consult the latter, and see how it could be managed.

Dr. Montague then took his leave, and Julia flew to detail all that had passed to her affectionate and faithful servant, concluding by saying—

“Indeed, my dear Merlin, in spite of all my sorrows, this seems the first moment of real happiness I have known since I married.

My heart feels lightened of a most insupportable load ; for however I might attempt to stifle the voice of conscience, I knew all along how wrong I was, and the not being able to talk unreservedly to you, my only friend, bitterly augmented my wretchedness."

Poor Merlin shed tears of joy on hearing this frank explanation from her beloved mistress, and she no longer hesitated to inform her of all she knew of the plot Don Gasparo had laid for her. She did not add her suspicions that the Marchese was his confederate in it ; as, although she guessed that Julia thought so too, she, with her usual prudence, considered it better not by talking on the subject to increase the feelings of dislike to her husband which her mistress could now no longer conceal.

"How wilfully blind I have been," said Julia, "or, rather, how weak and vain, to be pleased and led away by flattery ! for that has been the root of my delusion. But tell me, Merlin, how shall I manage to meet Madame Renzil ? I shall not ask Girolamo's permission, and then I cannot meet with a refusal. As this German family is known

to Dr. Montague, I am assured of their respectability, and, as I hope to derive much benefit from Mons. Renzil's instructions, as well as from his mother's advice, I feel I am not acting wrong."

"The only person who is a spy upon our actions," replied Merlin, "is Riccardo. He reports everything to his master, and he hates you and myself because we are foreigners and heretics, and there is nothing he would not do to spite us; but he is now out, I know, with the Marchese, and will not return for some time. You may therefore pay your first visit immediately, and I shall watch and let you know when I see them returning."

Julia lost no time in profiting of the opportunity. She was received by the Renzils with the greatest joy. Dr. Montague had just been there, and had informed them of her intention of visiting them, as of her providential escape from the toils of Don Gasparo.

"I feel to you already as if you were my daughter, my dear Marchesa," said the benevolent Madame Renzil. "Dr. Montague has

told us all you have suffered, and also the difficult position you now find yourself in. We pity you from our hearts, my dear young lady. But take courage, and doubt not that He who has brought you through so great perils will continue to preserve and watch over you, if you pray with earnest sincerity for His aid. Come to us whenever you can—late or early—you shall always be welcome. I only trust you will apply to us on all occasions, if you think we can in any way be useful to you.”

Julia thanked her new friends again and again for their kindness, and promised to let them know by Merlin when she could repeat her visit unobserved. A few minutes after she regained her apartment the Marchese entered, saying—

“I have just been to see poor Don Gasparo, who is very ill. A sudden fit of gout seized him yesterday, and he is now confined to bed in great pain ; but in spite of his sufferings he thought of you, and sending for me he gave me this packet of books for you, which he entreats you will carefully peruse,

as he flatters himself they will please you. They are principally sermons of his own, which, he added, you may make use of on Sundays, as he fears it will be several weeks before he shall be well enough to preach again, and he does not think you would like the preacher who is to do duty for him."

Julia could scarcely conceal her satisfaction at thus most unexpectedly being released from Don Gasparo's society for the present, at least, and from being questioned as to her reasons for no longer attending at the Santo Spirito. She, however, expressed concern for his indisposition, and desired Girolamo to thank him for his books (without, however, promising to read them); and the Marchese having executed the commission which had been entrusted to him, hurried away—as he now always did—seeming to find nothing so great a seccatura as the being alone with his wife, though seven months only had elapsed since they were married!

Merlin was as much delighted as her lady to hear of Don Gasparo's being confined to

his room, and they immediately sent for Giovanni to consult with him when would be the time Riccardo would be the least likely to find out they were at the Renzils' ; to which he replied that he thought while Don Gasparo continued ill they might safely attend service there on the Sunday morning, as Riccardo was generally at mass then, and that besides, as he had doubtless been informed that Don Gasparo rather wished the Marchesa not to hear any other preacher than himself, and had supplied her with books, he would never suspect her of wishing to attend Protestant prayers.

"Then," added Giovanni, "I have another plan in my head. You may remember that there is a back stair, which leads from your apartments to the great staircase, and is shut in by a door at the bottom, of which Riccardo has the key. I shall watch the first opportunity of getting hold of it, and shall have another made exactly like it, and by it you can let yourselves out and spend the evening below whenever you please, as Riccardo will think all is safe

enough when he has locked the door at the top of the scala grande."

Both Julia and Merlin most warmly expressed their thanks to the good Giovanni, who the next day successfully achieved getting possession of the key, and very soon brought its counterpart in triumph to Merlin, who ran with it immediately to her lady.

"How I hate all this deception!" said Julia on receiving it. "I only trust that God, who sees my heart and knows my motives and my cruel position, will pardon the means I am constrained to employ to obtain the society of these valuable friends. Were I to inform my husband of my intimacy with them, I am well aware I should instantly be commanded never to see them more; and thus I should wilfully throw from me the only opportunity that may ever be offered to me in this land of Popery, of having all the errors I have lately fallen into faithfully pointed out to me, and of having my religious principles and feelings strengthened by an intercourse with such

sincere and enlightened Christians. Girolamo solemnly promised me on our marriage that he never would interfere with me on the subject of my religion, or desire me to do anything I considered contrary to it ; but the manner in which he has failed in his word, along with the plot we have discovered him to be engaged in with Don Gasparo, proves too evidently the persecution I must expect to be subjected to from him. Should he ever find out and question me respecting my visits to the Renzils, I shall not hesitate a moment to brave his wrath by declaring the whole truth ; but in the mean time I cannot give up what may be of everlasting benefit to me, in order to gratify him in what he would be most unjustifiable in desiring of me.

Merlin fully coincided in her mistress's opinion, and Julia added, sighing—

“How grieved I am not to have a sousⁱⁿ my possession, and therefore I have no means of rewarding the excellent Giovanni as I should wish, for all the compassionate attention he has shown me.”

"But I have, my dearest mistress," answered Merlin eagerly, "and it is all at your disposal. Did you really believe I would have been so selfish as to have taken your money for my own purposes (as I seemed to have done a little while ago)? My only intention was to reserve it for your use. I require nothing, so only tell me how much you want, without scruple; never fear, I am sure you will one day be able to repay me, but even should you not, it is only too great happiness for your poor Merlin to think she can do you this very trifling service."

Julia's ready tears flowed fast at this new proof of her maid's affection. Merlin, however, did not stay to hear her thanks, but running to her room, she returned with twenty piastres, which she said she thought Giovanni merited, for his unwearied endeavours to contribute to their comfort in every way since they entered the house.

"I know," said she, "that he is very badly paid, and therefore this sum will be of the greatest use to him."

"I shall not hesitate, my dear, kind Mer-

lin," said Julia, "to accept this obligation in addition to the many I already owe you, and the Almighty will reward you, if I never can."

They then called Giovanni, who was quite overwhelmed by his mistress's generosity. He had really not acted from interested motives (wonderful to say for a Neapolitan). He did not imagine she had a carlino allowed her by the Marchese, but having a naturally kind heart, and pitying the unhappiness of so young and lovely a being, he, with all the *empressement* of an Italian (where their feelings are excited), sincerely devoted himself to serve her. Merlin did not inform her lady how much of her personal and daily comforts she owed to her private little hoard ; Julia was such a novice in housekeeping, and had been so accustomed to have every luxury found for her, without her taking the trouble to give them a thought, that she had not an idea of the innumerable wants she must daily feel in an Italian *ménage*, where comfort is unknown ; but except when it could not escape her observation, the sensible Merlin deter-

mined to keep her in ignorance of the fact; and by means of Giovanni she procured many little delicacies she knew would be agreeable to her mistress. Her room being within that of her lady, Riccardo had no pretext for entering it, so he saw none of her cookery; and for a considerable time she had ceased even to fear the intrusion of the Marchese, for he no longer occupied the same room as Julia, being afraid (as he said) of disturbing her by coming home at late hours; and he had accordingly betaken himself to one of the rooms at the back of the house, where he was more entirely at liberty to do as he pleased, and return to his old habits. Merlin had now also encroached upon the sum of money left by Miss Bellfield for her sister's use, feeling assured that the moment for its being required was now arrived; and trusting that when Dr. Montague returned to England, he would mediate between Mr. Bellfield and his daughter, and at least, through Harriet, be able to procure some secret supply for Julia.

All succeeded according to their wishes in regard to their meetings with the Renzils.

Neither the Marchese nor Riccardo entertained the slightest suspicion of them, and for more than a month they passed almost every evening together, unless when Julia was obliged to visit the Melvilles, or make an occasional evening call. The gaiety of the season had not yet commenced, but she looked forward with dread to the carnival. All her hopes of domestic happiness being destroyed, she felt that to go night after night to crowded parties (which the Marchese would insist upon her doing, because as his wife it would be remarked if she did not), where she had not a single friend, would be a life so profitless and wearisome, that she knew not how she should be able to support it. But her mind had improved most wonderfully since her intimacy with these worthy Germans and Dr. Montague, who had, with the sincerity of true friends, opened her eyes to all her faults, and she at last became sensible from whence must be derived the only real consolation for all her distresses ; and that until that is brought home to the heart by conviction, there can be no permanent

happiness ; but, once possessed, it can make the heaviest trials seem light.

Dr. Montague and Mr. Renzil examined the books which Don Gasparo had sent to Julia, and found several of them very cleverly and plausibly written, and well calculated to shake the religious opinions of a girl who had never thought seriously on the important subject, and who was not sufficiently conversant with her Bible to be able to refute the false statements they contained by comparing them with the words of Scripture. But this, by the blessing of God upon the kind assistance of her friends, she now learnt to do, and many of these precious evenings were devoted to this most beneficial study.

During the prolonged illness of Don Gasparo, Julia had frequently sent to inquire for him, and she had received many messages from him in return, hoping she was perusing his books, to which she replied in the affirmative ; but he little suspected in what manner she was giving her attention to them. At length Girolamo one day informed her that Don Gasparo was so much recovered, he

hoped very shortly to be able to pay her a visit—most unwelcome news to poor Julia ; and she went immediately to ask the Renzils what they would advise her to do.

“Avow your principles boldly, my dear Marchesa,” said young Renzil. “If you shrink from so doing, you will be practising a most fearful deception ; and you know from our Saviour’s own words what will be His sentence upon those who deny Him before men. You had better not trust to a personal interview with this priest ; you are too timid and nervous to encounter either his wrath or his eloquence. Write to him and return his books, saying you have perused them carefully, and that you find in them so much that is contrary to the Word of God as given in the Bible, you consider them a most unprofitable and pernicious study for a Protestant ; that you thank him if he intended you a benefit by sending them to you, but, for the future, you request he will forbear from naming the subject of religion to you, as it is quite impossible that his arguments should make the slightest impres-

sion upon you, and you have no wish to enter into controversy with him."

Julia thanked Renzil, and immediately followed his advice, which, as she anticipated, drew down upon her a torrent of abuse from her husband, to whom Don Gasparo had shown her note.

"It must be that old birbone Montague who has taught you to be thus insolent to my friend," said he. "You will ruin me with my uncle, as, of course, he will resent this affront to Don Gasparo. But you have been my destruction and disappointment in every respect," added he, his eyes sparkling with fury, "*E volesse Dio che non vi avessi mai veduto!*" (and would to God I had never seen you!)

So saying, he rushed from the room, leaving Julia almost fainting from the shock of so brutal a speech, and it required all Merlin's most affectionate efforts to restore her to some degree of tranquillity. Her imaginary love for Girolamo had long been at an end, but she was resolved that she would at least do all that was in her power to be a good

wife, and she had hitherto endeavoured to overlook his unkindness as much as possible; but this last scene showed him in too plain colours to leave her any hope of ever reclaiming one so utterly devoid of principle and feeling, and she could only wring her hands and exclaim—

“Oh, how justly I am punished! My dear papa and my darling Harriet, could you behold your poor Julia’s misery, would you not at least compassionate her?”

The Renzils, it may be supposed, sympathised most deeply with their unhappy young friend, on hearing what had passed; but they could only advise her to bear with patient resignation the woes she had brought upon herself. They ardently longed, as did Dr. Montague, to see her separated from so unworthy a partner; but until the doctor could see Mr. Bellfield, and endeavour to soften him in her favour, and induce him to give her once more an asylum in his house, he thought it better not to agitate her by naming such a measure as possible.

Don Gasparo made no reply to Julia’s

letter, nor did he ever appear again at Palazzo Landini, at least not in that part of it which was occupied by her, which was an inexpressible relief to her; and her correspondence with the Cardinal had ceased after a letter or two had passed between them, as he then considered her safe in the hands of his friend, and wished to avoid the appearance of having had anything to do with her change of religion, in order that the Bellfields might not suspect the Marchese of being an accomplice in the plot.

Julia was however much shocked one morning soon after the scene above described had taken place, when Girolamo, abruptly entering her room, informed her of the sudden death of his uncle by a stroke of apoplexy. She immediately expressed her regret for the sorrow she supposed her husband must feel on losing so near a relative; but, to her surprise, he appeared totally indifferent to it: his only anxiety being to ascertain how the Cardinal's property was left. And he told Julia he must set off immediately for Rome, in order to receive the desired infor-

mation. He then left her with his usual *sang froid*, saying he should return in the course of a week or ten days.

These days were passed most happily by the deserted wife; as Riccardo, satisfied that she never went out except for a drive (the coachman was a creature of his own), and received no one but the Melvilles and Dr. Montague, never thought of entering her apartment, knowing by instinct that he was odious to her; and, having locked her up at night at an early hour, he generally went out to amuse himself, having, in his own rank, the same dissipated habits as his master. Julia and her little coterie, therefore, assembled without fear of discovery, and her three friends exerted themselves in every way to entertain and raise her spirits; in which they succeeded so well that she frequently for a short time showed herself to them as the Julia of her unmarried days, in all the innocent playfulness of her natural disposition, and appeared so very charming that Dr. Montague wondered not at his

nephew's despair on having lost such a treasure.

But as the day for Girolamo's return approached, all her cheerfulness disappeared. She felt that should he have found the Cardinal's will unfavourable, the disappointment would render his temper only still more insupportable; and it was with an aching heart she heard the sound of the carriage that conveyed him once more to Palazzo Landini. Scarcely dared she advance to address him. The words of welcome died away upon her lips. But Girolamo seemed to consider no salutation as necessary; for, throwing himself upon a chair, he said—

“You will doubtless be glad to hear, signora, that you have succeeded in depriving me of my uncle's fortune, as your male-detto father has deprived me of my just rights over yours. If you had not been so squeamish about changing your religion, I should now have been a rich man; but you chose to provoke the Cardinal by your insolence to Don Gasparo, and, in conse-

quence, he has cut me off without a sou, leaving the whole of his wealth to the Church !”

Julia, roused by his disrespectful mention of her parent, indignantly replied, “ Say what you will to me or of me—I can bear it all, but I will not hear you name my beloved father in such terms ! Your accusation of myself is too unjust to deserve notice. How can you know or suppose that the Cardinal was so much interested in my becoming a Roman Catholic ?”

“ If you will be informed of the truth, then,” returned Girolamo, still more incensed, and no longer master of himself : “ My uncle promised me 20,000 ducats whenever he should hear that your conversion had taken place, and the whole of his fortune at his death.”

“ Is it possible ?” said Julia, her countenance becoming as pale as a statue. “ And were you really so wicked as to plot with these priests to deceive me for the bribe you were to receive if you succeeded ? My God !” added she, raising her streaming eyes to

heaven, "how can I ever be sufficiently grateful to Thee for having preserved me from such a snare?"

"This may be all very fine, signora," said the Marchese, his lips quivering with rage, "but you shall know by experience that an Italian never forgets or forgives an injury; and sooner or later you shall feel how grateful I can be to you!"

He left the room as he spoke, and during the next week or two Julia scarcely saw him, except when they met in society, where he had the tact to conceal all appearance of their being on bad terms. On the contrary, he was so amiable in manner and so full of *petits soins* for her, that his Neapolitan friends were all quizzing him, and remarking in what good discipline he was kept by his English wife.

"Pauvre petite!" he would reply, with a well-assumed air of tenderness. "Elle a été enfant gatée, and it would be cruel in me now to let her feel any difference; elle est si bonne, et elle m'aime tant."

Julia sometimes overheard the remarks

and replies, and it may be imagined with what disgust. It was now become the greatest punishment to her to go out ; but she preferred enduring it to listening to Girolamo's cutting reproaches at home if she ever absented herself. For a short time after the Cardinal's death, she gladly took advantage of her being in deep mourning as an excuse for remaining quiet, and the Marchese was obliged in decency to do the same. He consoled himself, however, by spending all his evenings at the Melvilles', and, whenever he could elude the vigilance of Dr. Montague, by engaging Melville to play. In order to meet Julia at the Renzils', the doctor had frequently left his quondam pupil alone, having hinted to Mrs. Melville to occupy both her husband and the Marchese either with music or conversation, and prevent their making up their gambling party ; but that weak and thoughtless woman was too much intent upon her own flirtations to remember the request. Consequently the watchful Girolamo found it easy to accomplish his purpose ; and Melville, alternately

allured by being permitted to win, and ashamed to leave off when the luck turned against him, frequently lost large sums without either the knowledge of his wife or Dr. Montague.

About this time the Marchese was again much annoyed by the return of Hortense to Naples, who, being aware of her power over him, had no bounds to her extravagant demands, which for the moment he was able to comply with by means of pillaging Melville; but he knew that source must ere long fail, as they (the Melvilles) were very shortly going to Rome, and then he knew not what could be done, for, as we have already seen, he dreaded above all things Julia's discovering that he had a mistress. He had no fear that the former would ever disclose to any one his unkindness and insolence to herself in private; that, he knew, her delicacy would shrink from; and even were she at last provoked into complaining, he was sure the world of Naples would never credit such accusations of so apparently affectionate a husband. But still clinging to the distant

hope that, at his death at least, Mr. Bellfield might leave his daughter a fortune, his anxious wish was that so glaring a piece of bad conduct as his continuing to maintain an amica might not be conveyed to England and aggravate his father-in-law still more against him.

From this motive, therefore, he refused Hortense nothing she asked ; and, she satisfied by his submission, all was for the present harmony between them.

The 1st of January approached, when a grand circolo (or drawing-room) is always held at court, and the Marchese was desirous his wife should make her first appearance there in the best possible style, particularly as King Ferdinando had graciously intimated to him his wish to see his English bride. He accordingly told Julia one morning, that she must prepare properly for the occasion, and, to her surprise, he presented her with a large sum (which he had cheated Melville out of the preceding night), and desired she would purchase a dress which might vie in

magnificence with that of the first Neapolitan ladies.

"You can keep an exact account of what you lay out, to show me," added he, with calculating coldness, "and you will return me what remains of the money when all is paid."

Julia answered calmly that he should be obeyed; she felt that no thanks were due to the husband, who merely wished to exhibit her as a puppet, which must be properly attired to do him honour; and Girolamo, guessing her thoughts, left her without making any further remark.

"Were it not that I still fondly hope that God will permit me to embrace my dearest papa and sister once more before I die," said she to Merlin, whom she went to acquaint with the Marchese's orders, "I feel that I wish it was a shroud that I was going to have made for myself, instead of a gala dress; but I endeavour to receive each new trial as the salutary chastisement of my offended Saviour, for my forgetfulness of Him in my

days of sunshine, and by submitting to them without a murmur, that they may be sanctified to me."

She then with a heavy heart began her consultations upon what her dress should be. Her father had purchased for her in Paris a most magnificent lace dress (*point de Bruxelles*), which he would not allow her to have made up until they should return to England, as he intended it to be worn at the drawing-room when she made her *début* in London.

This Merlin advised her to wear over white silk, having it trimmed with bouquets of white roses ; her train they settled should be of the richest white moire antique (it being her first public appearance as a bride), and lappets, with a bandeau of pearls upon her beautiful fair hair, completed her attire.

All was arranged by the indefatigable Merlin in the most elegant style ; nothing could fit more beautifully than her dress, and when she presented herself to the Marchese on the evening of the *circolo*, he could not help regarding her with admiration, though no feeling of love accompanied it, and being

satisfied that she had displayed the most perfect good taste, after he had examined her *tout ensemble* with the eye of a connoisseur, he said coolly—

“You will be sure not to mention to any one that you did not purchase your dress expressly for this occasion, as all our ladies will be aware of its value. Your necklace of pearls is splendid,” continued he. “What did your father give for it?” (It was a single row of beautifully regular pearls of an unusually large size.)

“It was my mother’s,” replied Julia, disgusted by these remarks and questions. “I never heard its value. I believe my grandfather ordered it for her from India when she married.”

“Ah! your father was a lucky dog,” said Girolamo. “He wisely felt his way, and secured the golden prize before he thrust his head into the noose. But come, don’t whimper,” added he, seeing the tears start to her eyes. “It is time we were gone. How tiresome it is to have a moping wife!” and giving her his arm, he led her to the carriage.

It is not the *règle* at Naples for the ladies of the country to be presented at the same time as foreigners, the *circolo* for the former being held on the evening before the gala, and for the latter on the morning of the day. The *salon* on this night was very full, and a murmur of admiration was heard on all sides when Julia entered, accompanied by the Duchessa Caravetta, who was her chaperone, the Neapolitan husbands being presented separately. Julia had lost much of the bright bloom she had when she first came to Naples, and though she must always be lovely, she was now generally pale, but the idea of this being her first appearance in a scene so brilliant, increased her natural timidity, while the excitement brought back the roses to her fair cheeks, and she looked the very *beau idéal* of a beautiful bride. The old King himself was much struck with her loveliness, and spoke to her with great affability, declaring he was proud of his new subject, and hoping she was so well pleased with bella Napoli, that she would find no difficulty in adopting it as her country. Fortunately a

reply in words is seldom required to the speeches of royalty ; his Majesty smiled and passed on, internally thanked by poor Julia, who felt that if her life had depended upon it, she could not have articulated. The presentations were not numerous, as the number of ladies who are of sufficient rank to be admitted at the court of Naples is comparatively small ; the drawing-room was therefore soon over, and Julia, completely exhausted, gladly retired to rest the moment she reached home.

The Melvilles had fixed to leave Naples two days after the gala, and Dr. Montague felt as much grieved as his young friend at the idea of a separation ; but the Renzils were to remain till the spring, so he consoled himself with the knowledge that Julia would not be left without protection, and he assured her that as he should not leave Rome for two months, should she at any time require his assistance, she had only to desire Madame Renzil to write to him, and he would immediately hasten to her.

It was settled that their correspondence

should be carried on under cover to Madame Renzil, and he promised to let her know whenever he could obtain any tidings of her family. He would not at this parting hour make her more sad by telling her, that some time previous he had received through Mordaunt very bad accounts of her sister's health, whose malady was now so rapidly increasing that it seemed surprising from day to day to the physicians when they returned and found her still alive. She suffered little except from weakness, and her conversation, when she could speak, was always of Julia.

Mordaunt promised to enter more into details in his next letter, as he was then wholly engrossed between the afflicted parent and the dying Harriet, both of whom seemed to look to him for consolation, as if he had been their son and brother.

Julia felt particularly annoyed that on the night of the gala there was a full illumination at San' Carlo, and as the ladies who have attended the drawing-room always go to the theatre in their court dresses, she

was sure the Marchese would not dispense with her making her appearance there also. She would so much have preferred passing the evening with Dr. Montague and the Rennils, but she would not subject herself to an insulting refusal, so she made no request to be left at home.

She had had a visit from Dr. Montague in the morning, who had promised to spend the following evening with her, and having most reluctantly performed the duties of the toilet, she seated herself to wait for the same Duchessa who had chaperoned her to the drawing-room, and who was now to take her to San' Carlo.

When she reached the latter, neither the brilliancy of the scene nor the beauty of a new ballet could in the least raise her spirits, and she looked so very unhappy that the Cavaliere Cerulli, one of the young men who surrounded her, compassionately observed—

“*Madame est indisposée ce soir ?*” but before she could reply, Girolamo, who had his eyes fixed upon her, said—

“ Je vous dirai pourquoi elle est si triste : moi, j’avais une migraine affreuse à diner, et je ne pouvais rien manger, and she is so much afraid that I am really ill she can think of nothing else. Mais soyez tranquille, ma chère,” added he. “ Je vous jure que je n’ai plus douleur, je me porte parfaitement bien.”

Julia coloured indignantly at this new proof of her husband’s duplicity, but his conduct had ceased to wound her feelings as it did when she imagined she loved him ; she therefore remained silent, which the ladies construed into her being ashamed of having her tenderness made public, and shrugging her shoulders, one of them said to the other—

“ Quanto è seccante quest’ amore conjugale degli Inglesi ! ” (how tiresome that English conjugal love is !)

The Marchese then, addressing Julia, said —“ You really look quite fatigued and ill, my love ; I must take you home immediately. I have only to pay my compliments to one or

two friends, to whom I shall also make your apology, and return for you."

Julia was at a loss to imagine what motive Girolamo could have for this unusual complacency, but she rejoiced when he shortly after came to announce that the carriage waited, a summons she obeyed with the utmost alacrity.

"I hope you were obliged to me for coming to your assistance to-night, and accounting for your woe-begone looks," said the Marchese as soon as they were alone.

"You must really learn not to behave so like a child in company. I shall be so glad when that odious, gloomy Dr. Montague is gone, as you will then be entirely with Neapolitans, and may forget your baby English ways."

The darkness of the night concealed from Girolamo the tears which now flowed fast down the patient Julia's pale cheeks. She made no answer, as indeed she now rarely did to any of his cruel speeches, and before they reached Palazzo Landini, she had by an

effort succeeded in calming her agitation. Her husband alighted with her, desiring the carriage to wait for him, and when they got upstairs he said—

“By the bye, the Principessa di Stefano admired your pearls particularly to-night, and asked me if I would beg you to allow her to see your necklace at her own house. She will take the greatest care of it; but she would like to show it to her jeweller, to know if it will be possible to procure one at all resembling it, for the sposa of her eldest son, who you know is about to be married.”

Julia remembered nothing either of the Principessa or her son, but, ever obliging, she replied—

“Certainly; I can send Merlin with it to her to-morrow.”

“I am now going to sup with her,” said Girolamo; “you can give it to me, and I shall deliver it into her own hand at once, which will be the safest way;” and Julia, eager to be alone, unclasped it instantly and gave it to him, saying—

“If the Principessa wishes to detain it for

a few days, pray let her do so, as I shall not want it."

Being quite unsuspecting she did not observe the confused looks with which (though so hardened in vice) the Marchese received the pearls; but, scarcely bidding her good night, he hurried downstairs, and Julia felt comparatively happy when she heard the carriage drive away with him, and flew down to spend half an hour with the Renzils before retiring to rest.

When Merlin came to undress her, she started on not perceiving the necklace, and her lady explaining that Girolamo had carried it away with him, she looked quite aghast, as she well remembered the note of Hortense regarding it; but almost immediately she blamed herself for her suspicions.

"Wicked as he is," thought she, "he can never do anything so publicly base as to give away his wife's own private jewels to his mistress."

But the Marchese had a different use to what Merlin supposed to make of the necklace he had so cunningly obtained from Julia.

It has been already mentioned that, for his own reasons, he had been most liberal to Hortense since her return to Naples ; but of late she had been so unceasing in her demands, that he was almost driven to despair. His supplies from Melville having been for some time uncertain, owing to the watchfulness of Dr. Montague, he was kept in a continual state of feverish agitation, and in this frame of mind he was easily induced, by some of his cooler gambling companions, to risk the small sum he still possessed at play with them. Their meetings generally took place at Hortense's, and she, who, with all the malignity of an unprincipled woman, had always longed for an opportunity of being revenged upon Girolamo (never having pardoned his deception about Julia), willingly lent her aid to these young men, particularly to a new admirer—the Duca di Lerice.

On the morning of the gala, she sent a note to the Marchese, saying she had a violent fancy for a lace dress exactly like that worn by the Marchesa, which she had heard was greatly admired ; and Girolamo, to gain time, said he would bring her the money

after the theatre. He had settled with Melville that they should have one last game together on the night before the departure of the latter, when he thought he was sure that Dr. Montague would be with Julia; and he fully intended that it should be a most profitable game for himself, as he should put in practice certain gambling tricks he had all along reserved for his last stroke, and which were sure of success with so inexperienced a player as Melville. He therefore cast his eyes upon Julia's necklace, which he thought there was no doubt of his being able to pawn for a large sum, which would be sufficient both to purchase the dress for Hortense, and leave him enough to stake with Melville; and feeling assured of rising a large winner, and that Melville must pay him immediately, on account of his leaving Naples, he, with the delusive speculations of a gamester, calculated that he should redeem the pearls the following day, and still have a considerable sum remaining.

On quitting Julia the night of the gala, he drove straight to his friend the Jew's,

who to his disappointment he found was not at home, and not likely to return till a very late hour, so he thought it was best to keep his engagement with Hortense, as, by showing her the necklace, she would have no difficulty in believing that he really would bring her the sum she required on the morrow ; he also considered that in playing with any of her party, he could easily obtain credit upon so valuable an ornament.

On arriving at Hortense's house in Sta. Lucia, he found only her friend the Duca, who had previously arranged with her that he would "spoil" Girolamo in the same manner that he had laid his plans against Melville. Hortense's eyes sparkled when she beheld the necklace, which had always been the object of her envy, and she now determined it should be hers either by fair means or foul ; but the worthy duo, by significant glances, warned each other that they must go cautiously to work.

They then sat down to supper, which Hortense had taken care should consist of dishes the most likely to occasion extreme thirst, to

assuage which she pressed the Marchese to drink largely of what she called Capri wine, but which was in reality strong champagne, and by the time supper was ended he was thoroughly intoxicated, and more eager than ever for play. One or two games he was permitted to win, and elated by the success, and now nearly unconscious of what he was doing, he held up the string of pearls, saying—

“Look well at these, Duca, and you will not doubt my ability to pay you if I should lose.”

“Let me wear them,” said Hortense, snatching them from Girolamo, and putting them round her neck; “you will have a better view of them in this way,” and Girolamo, intent upon his cards, made no opposition.

But now the luck of course turned upon him, and game after game was lost, until the Duca at last was weary of success, the sum he had won far exceeding (as he thought) the value of the necklace, and he was about to propose their leaving off, when the door opened

and two of the Marchese's principal creditors entered, who had been at his own house in search of him, and, by Riccardo, were sent on to Hortense's. Girolamo became instantaneously sober on seeing them, and, while the veins seemed starting from his forehead and his face became deadly pale, he demanded their business.

"The question is very unnecessary, Signor Marchese," replied one of them; "but we have one to put to you which is considerably more to the purpose. Are you ready to pay the debts so long owing us, and which our patience can no longer wait for, or will you go with us to prison?"

Girolamo, infuriated, rose to strike the speaker, but the Duca, seizing him by the arm, kept him forcibly upon his seat, and, winking to the men, he said—

"You have chosen your time very ill, as you may perceive; the Marchese is not able to talk with you now. I will answer for his satisfying you to-morrow—or accepting the alternative," added he in a low voice to the one nearest him.

And Hortense, beckoning them into the next room, said—

“You will gain nothing if you carry him off a prisoner to-night, but you may secure a very considerable sum to-morrow night at this hour if you will have patience till then ; and his person will still be at your disposal as security for the remainder of his debts. He is no friend of mine. I tell you frankly I have much cause to detest him, and I shall willingly assist you to get hold of him. Leave us now, and before mezzo giorno (mid-day) to-morrow you shall have a note from me to tell you what you must do.”

The two men being aware of Hortense’s character, and seeing that what she advised was decidedly the most for their interest, consented to depart ; and Hortense returned with a smiling countenance to assure Girolamo that she had persuaded them to wait till the day after the following one—

“When, I trust, that, by the aid of Melville’s purse, you will be rich enough to pay us all ; and when that is the case,” added she, coaxingly, “I hope you won’t forget

my dress. But pray go home, and endeavour to sleep off the bad headache I see you are suffering from. You look so ill, *Madame votre femme* will be frightened to see you."

Girolamo rose to go, but was sufficiently sober to ask her to give him the necklace.

"You forget it is mine for the present," said the Duca ; and seeing the look of horror his words had excited, he added, with a laugh, "It is safer with me than with you till you can redeem it, you know. Some of these *ladri* who have just been here might seize it, and then you would lose it for ever."

Girolamo was obliged to agree to this arrangement, however grating to his feelings ; and remembering that Julia would not expect to have it again for a few days, he took leave of his amiable coadjutors, and at a late hour regained his own palace, where, throwing himself upon his bed, he obtained an hour or two's heavy repose.

On awakening the next morning he had but a confused idea of the events of the past night, and, as they by degrees presented

themselves before him, he felt that the crisis of his fate was at hand, and that one more day must decide it. Having endeavoured to quiet his nerves and relieve the agonising pain in his temples by drinking some very strong coffee, he walked into Julia's room to find out if she intended dining at the Melvilles', and he was greatly relieved when she replied in the negative.

"I have so bad a cold that Mrs. Melville has kindly promised to call and bid me adieu; and Dr. Montague will spend the evening with me. But what is the matter with you?" continued she, observing his haggard looks. "Are you ill?"

"I drank some wine and ate oysters, which disagreed with me, last night," replied he, "and I have a headache. I shall go and take a drive, which will soon cure me."

He then ordered his carriage, and drove to the palace of the Duca di Lerice, where a note from the latter was given to him, to say that a friend had called early in the morning and asked him to accompany him to Persano for a few days' shooting; that he should

return to Naples by the end of the week, and that not having any one at that early hour to whom he could intrust the necklace, he had locked it up in his desk, where it would be perfectly safe during his absence. This was not true, as he had left it with Hortense, and they had not the slightest intention of ever giving it to the Marchese again; but the Duca thought the excuse would satisfy him for the moment. Girolamo was however dreadfully annoyed on reading the note, but he did not suspect any treachery either on the part of the Duca or Hortense; and reflecting that Melville would not care whether he produced his money before they began to play or not, he turned away from the Duca's house, and drove up the Strada Nuova, in hopes the sea air would cool his aching head and restore him to himself before the hour of dinner.

Julia meanwhile had been receiving the adieux of Mrs. Melville, which made her very melancholy, as they were so soon to be followed by those of her valued friend, Dr. Montague.

As evening approached she became still more *triste*, and about eight o'clock, as she was in momentary expectation of seeing him, a note was brought to her from him to say that some particular business would prevent his being with her for an hour, but that he would make up for it by remaining longer when he did come. Julia continued sitting ruminating for some time, when, to her surprise, Riccardo entered to inquire if she wanted anything, adding that Giovanni had been sent out by his master on a distant message, and might not return till late.

Julia coldly replied that she would ring should she require him, internally regretting Giovanni's absence, as it would prevent her going down with Dr. Montague when he went to bid farewell to the Renzils.

Another half-hour had scarcely elapsed when Riccardo, again entering, said that a lady was coming upstairs to pay her a visit, and she had only time to exclaim, "How very tiresome! Why did not you say I did not receive?" when her visitor entered unannounced, and, advancing to

Julia, who rose to meet her, she threw herself into a chair, and the former, with her usual politeness, apologised for the Marchese's absence, and begged to know whom she had the honour of addressing, wondering in her own mind who this gaily attired female could be.

"I have long known you, Marquise," said Hortense (for it was she) with great *sang froid*, "although you do not remember me; and I hope you will be sensible of my condescension in paying you a visit, though you have never thought proper to answer the note I sent you several months ago."

Julia stared in unfeigned astonishment, and replied that she had never heard of the note to which she alluded, consequently it was impossible for her to have answered it.

"Pray make no apology," said Hortense, insolently; "it is quite immaterial. I promised you in that note that I should probably one day honour you by wearing your pearls, and I am now fulfilling that promise. Don't you think that the necklace is particularly becoming to my brunette complexion?"

The bewildered Julia could scarcely believe the evidence of her eyes, when she looked as she was desired, and beheld this unknown person adorned with her pearl necklace; her tongue clave to the roof of her mouth, and she in vain tried to articulate; but her first idea was that this woman was a bold thief, who had stolen it, and was now come in search of more plunder, being aware of the Marchese's absence; and after a moment uttering a loud shriek, she called out—"Riccardo! Riccardo! ladri! ladri!" but Riccardo was conveniently deaf, and kept his station in the outer room; and, Hortense being between her and the door, Julia could not pass in that direction; she therefore flew to call Merlin from the room beyond her own, who instantly came running to her, and was equally alarmed, for, never having seen Hortense, she had no idea it was she.

"Pray do not agitate yourself to such a degree, Marchesa," said the latter; "you have no personal danger to fear, the explanation will soon be made, and it is nothing so very new or wonderful that a husband

should prefer his *amie* to his wife ; and as yours has chosen to present me with your pearls, you must just console yourself in the best way you can without them."

Julia now found words, and, clasping her hands in a supplicating attitude, she exclaimed—

"Oh ! whoever you are, for pity's sake do not deprive me of what I value more than anything I possess. That necklace was the last gift of a beloved mother, and to lose it would break my heart. I have other ornaments, they are not so costly, as they are only of gold, but I have valuable rings, and a fine watch and seals,—take them all, but, I beseech you, restore me my pearls. Bring my jewel box," said she to Merlin, "and let this lady examine its contents."

"Doucement, doucement, ne vous dérangez pas à faire cela," said Hortense. "As you talk so reasonably, we may come to terms which may be more agreeable to you. I have a conscience, though your bon mari has none. You have a lace dress, which will please me much more than your ornaments ;

I have plenty of them, and as for this bauble, you shall have it again if you will make the exchange."

"Willingly," said Julia, eagerly. "Bring it instantly, Merlin ; I have many other gifts of my dearest father's, so I scruple not to part with it in such a case."

Merlin hastened to obey her mistress, and the moment she reappeared, Hortense threw the necklace to Julia, and coolly taking the dress (which was ready folded up), she opened the door, and calling Riccardo, who came fast enough when he heard her voice, she said—

"Take that packet, and put it into my carriage," which was instantly done.

This extraordinary bargain being concluded, Hortense still lingered, and turning again to Julia, she said—

"So your sister, I hear, is dead. What change do you think that will make in your English affairs ?"

But ere she could add more the Marchese, wild, haggard, and absolutely foaming at the mouth with passion, rushed into the

room. Hortense stepped back and concealed herself behind the door ; but she might have remained unheeded by Girolamo, who looked only for his wife, to whom he furiously advanced, and, roughly seizing and shaking her by the arm, he thundered out—

“Treacherous woman ! you merit death at my hands ! it is to you I owe my final destruction ! How dared you write to inform that old villain Dr. Montague of my designs upon Melville ? Oh ! that I could have killed him on the spot ! To be indignantly ordered to leave the house, and told that I owed my not being publicly exposed to his regard for you ! But, if I live, I shall repay you both !”

The unfortunate Julia pressed her hands upon her forehead, as if her brain was on fire, and sank upon a seat with a look of woe so unutterable that even Hortense was touched by it ; and coming forward to the astonished Girolamo (who started on beholding her as if he had seen a viper), she thus addressed him—

“Marchese, you have now to listen to me.

Accuse not yonder unhappy victim of having betrayed you; she knew nothing of your vile schemes. It is *I* who have all the merit of the transaction. You have perhaps forgot, but I never shall, that you tried to deceive me; and after all your professions you would willingly have cast me off long ago, had your own selfish fears not induced you to wear the mask a little longer. I have watched for an opportunity, which your plot to-night has at length afforded me, and now I shall prevent your doing more injury either to your wife or to me!"

She opened the door as she spoke, and the two men of the preceding evening, accompanied by two policemen, darted upon the wretched Marchese, who at once saw that all was over with him; but with the fury of rage he made a most desperate resistance. The struggle continued for several minutes, when suddenly his face became pale as death, he loosed his hold of the man he was fighting with, and, staggering back, he fell into the arms of the others, a river of blood at the same time issuing from his mouth:

a large vessel at his heart having given way in consequence of his violence. All stood for a moment horror-struck at the scene. Hortense was the first to speak.

“Je suis vengée !” said she, as, followed by the men, she fled from the room, and, getting into her carriage, drove instantly off.

Merlin followed her as rapidly as her trembling limbs would permit, to call for assistance ; and upon the stairs, to her inexpressible relief, she met Dr. Montague and Giovanni hurrying up with Riccardo, who was giving them some confused account of the affair. Giovanni was despatched by Merlin for a surgeon ; and when she and Dr. Montague entered the room, they found Julia on the floor, supporting the head of her dying husband, and, forgetful of all her injuries, bathing his face with her tears.

“Oh ! can nothing be done to save him ?” exclaimed she. “Unhappy man ! must he indeed die in this sad state ?”

Dr. Montague shook his head.

The immense loss of blood seemed now to have utterly exhausted Girolamo, who never

again opened his eyes or articulated, and, after a short struggle, in three or four minutes he breathed his last.

Julia could bear no more; and when she beheld her husband expire, she fell into so deep a swoon that both Dr. Montague and Merlin were dreadfully alarmed, and feared they should never be able to bring her back to life. Merlin now thought of the Renzils, and in a moment they were with their unhappy young friend; and the surgeon entering, he opened a vein in her arm, when she sighed deeply and gave signs of recovering; but before she could be aware where she was, Madame Renzil proposed at once carrying her down to her apartment, that she might not again see the Marchese's dead body. And this was immediately accomplished, Dr. Montague and M. Renzil remaining to see that all that was necessary was done.

Giovanni was sent off to inform some of the Marchese's most intimate friends, and also the police, of the tragical event; and as soon as these persons arrived, the gentle-

men, leaving them to arrange and manage everything, went to administer consolation to the afflicted young widow; but they found that for the present she was incapable of receiving it, being in a state of high fever and delirium: the fright, agitation, and horrors of the evening having been too much for both her mind and body, and several weeks elapsed ere she was capable of understanding or remembering what had passed.

On the very day upon which all these scenes took place, Dr. Montague had received from Mordaunt the accounts of poor Harriet Bellfield's death, which he intended cautiously to have communicated to Julia in the evening, having a letter from her sister to give to her, which he hoped would be the best consolation he could offer in the first moments of her anguish.

It will be remembered that Dr. Montague was prevented going to Palazzo Landini at the hour he intended, the cause of which was his receiving a note from Hortense, who warned him to keep a strict watch upon the Marchese, and upon no account to

leave him alone with Melville, as he was going to the latter with the fixed determination of gaining a large sum from him by unfair practices at play.

The note was without signature, but Dr. Montague had no doubt of the truth of its contents from the suspicions he had long entertained of the Marchese; he therefore resolved to follow the advice, and when the party had taken coffee and Mrs. Melville said she must leave her husband to entertain his friend, as she had still some farewell visits to pay, Dr. Montague accompanied her downstairs to her carriage, and the Marchese believed he was gone to Julia; but the Doctor returned upstairs, and gently opening a door behind which the two gentlemen were seated, he placed himself where he could, unperceived by the Marchese, narrowly watch all his motions.

Nor did he wait long before he had a clear proof of his villany. As in all similar cases (and as Girolamo had himself experienced the preceding night), Melville was at first successful, but after a few games Dr. Mon-

tague perceived that his adversary dexterously exchanged the pack of cards they were playing with for one of his own, which was of course previously packed and marked to serve his purposes.

The stakes were then doubled, and Melville became rapidly a loser to a considerable amount, which seeming to annoy him, the Marchese prudently again permitted him to be the winner, and, elated by this, the silly youth exclaimed—

“Come, Marchese, this is but child’s play ! Let us risk a little on this our last night. Shall we treble the stakes ?”

“As you please,” said Girolamo. “I see you are determined to ruin me. Will you take a bet also of 2,000 ducats that you shall go on winning the next three games ?”

“Done !” said Melville, and Girolamo now commenced his plot in good earnest, and Dr. Montague remained a quiet spectator of his iniquitous manœuvres, until the games were concluded, which left his pupil a loser of 10,000 ducats !

Melville was thunderstruck, the sum far

exceeding any he had ever lost before ; but, ashamed to appear to mind it, he was proposing their recommencing once more upon the same terms, when Dr. Montague, quickly rising from his place of concealment, seized the Marchese's pack of cards before he could prevent him, and challenging him with his cheating, he showed to the astonished Melville the marks by which his *friend* could easily distinguish every card, and explained distinctly how he had seen the latter arrange them, as well as other nefarious tricks he had practised, not necessary here to particularise. Then turning to the conscience-stricken Girolamo, he (as the Marchese related to Julia) ordered him instantly to leave the house, threatening him with an immediate appeal to Neapolitan authorities if he dared to approach Melville again, concluding by assuring him that if he did not soon hear a better account of his conduct in every respect, and that he treated his wife with the kindness she deserved, he would prevail upon Mr. Bellfield to separate her from him entirely.

Girolamo's eyes expressed all the fury he felt, but, smiling contemptuously, he said to Melville—

“Your worthy precettore (preceptor) seems to be wonderfully *au fait* of the science of card-playing for a *prête*. You will do well to profit by his instructions ere we play together again.” Then, taking up his hat, he walked coolly out of the house, containing his rage until it burst forth, as we have seen, upon his unfortunate wife, and finally terminated his own existence.

Dr. Montague only remained behind till he gave a short explanation to the completely humbled Melville of how he had been informed of the plot against him, which, he added, he trusted would be a lesson to him for life, and would determine him to renounce for ever the disgraceful vice of gambling.

What followed at Palazzo Landini has been already narrated. On the morning after, Dr. Montague received a packet containing the lace dress which Hortense had

carried away with her, along with the following note :—

“ I have not the courage to address her whom I have had much share in rendering unhappy, and whom I last night dared so wickedly to insult; but did she know all, I think that she who appears so angelic would have some compassion for me. Her affecting mention of her mother opened a wound I thought I was no longer capable of feeling. I was once innocent as she is, but I broke a mother's heart, and remorse must now haunt me for ever.

“ HORTENSE.”

Dr. Montague lost not a moment in writing an account of all that had occurred to Mor-daunt, to whom he committed the task of informing Mr. Bellfield of all his poor Julia had suffered, promising at the same time to send daily bulletins of her health till she should be pronounced out of danger, as he had decided to allow the Melvilles to proceed

to Rome alone, and not to quit his afflicted charge till he could bring her to England, and once more place her in the arms of her father.

Mr. Bellfield was much shocked to hear of the miserable end of the Marchese, but was most deeply overcome when he was informed of the months of unhappiness his beloved child had endured since her marriage, and the dreadful scenes through which she had lately passed.

“Had I been less cruel to her,” said the old man, weeping, “much of her sorrow might have been spared ; but the remainder of my life shall be devoted to console her, as she will me for the loss of my dearest Harriet. Oh, that she had been permitted to embrace her darling sister once more.”

Mr. Bellfield then wrote a most affectionate letter to Julia, saying he would instantly have set off for Naples on hearing of her husband's death, but that he had been dissuaded from doing so by his physicians, on account of the long journey in the winter season, and knowing she was under the

kind care of Dr. Montague rendered him more at ease about her.

When the violence of the fever which had seized Julia had subsided, it left her so deplorably weak, that a considerable time elapsed before she could converse, or even hear any one speak, and her friends had great fears that her nerves would never recover the shock they had received. So terrible was the impression left upon her mind by the tragic conclusion of her unfortunate husband's life, that if a door opened, or a person moved, she trembled violently, and gazed round with a terrified look, as if she expected again to behold the shocking spectacle ; and Dr. Montague, in compliance with the physician's voice, allowed her to remain perfectly quiet, until by degrees symptoms of returning strength both of body and mind appeared, and she was able to leave her bed ; when one morning Madame Renzil found her weeping bitterly (the first time she had shed tears since her illness), and throwing her arms round the good lady's neck, she whispered—

“Tell me, dearest friend, did not that dreadful woman say that my beloved Harriet was no more? Do not fear to answer me, I can bear anything now.”

Most tenderly did the excellent Madame Renzil communicate to her the distressing intelligence of Miss Bellfield's death; and though poor Julia's sorrow was intense, there was much to console her affectionate heart, when she opened the letter which Dr. Montague now hastened to give her, in which Harriet assured her that she had never for one instant ceased to love her, and that she had only refrained from writing to her in obedience to her father's commands.

“But in spite of this prohibition,” added she, “I was always convinced that in his heart he was as fondly attached to you as ever; I therefore did not urge or vex him by mentioning you at the first, reserving my earnest petition in your favour for the parting hour, when I happily found I was not mistaken, as he at once granted my request, and has solemnly promised me, that if ever, in sorrow or unhappiness, you ask for his

protection, he will immediately open his arms to receive you, and will forget all that is past. I have a presentiment (from some hints Mordaunt has lately let fall) that such a period is not far distant; avail yourself of it, dearest Julia, ere your health and spirits are quite exhausted. I cannot explain myself more clearly, but remember that you have a beloved parent, who will, ere many more days are over, be left entirely alone, without any one to console him, if you do not devote yourself to him. I am permitted to send this letter to you privately, and it will be secretly conveyed to you when I am no more. Adieu, my much-loved sister, and may God's choicest blessings rest with you. Oh! my Julia, never, I beseech you, forget Him, or the religious faith in which you have been brought up, and in all your distresses cast yourself at the feet of your Saviour; and there (if you seek it with sincerity) you will find a never-failing consolation. Do not grieve too deeply for my early death, or imagine that my grief on your account has accelerated it; my fate was decided before

we left England, as the doctors have since informed me, and they only ordered me abroad in the hope that a mild climate might prolong my days, but to save my life they knew to be impossible. Remember me affectionately to your excellent Merlin ; I need not entreat of her never to leave you, for I am well assured of her devoted fidelity. My strength fails ; once more farewell !

“HARRIET.”

When Julia was sufficiently composed to read her father's letter, her young and sanguine spirit seemed to revive with the prospect that there still remained a beloved object for her to cherish, and a sacred duty for her to perform, and she exclaimed—

“Oh, let me fly to him, and mingle my tears with his, and may the Almighty enable me to atone, by a whole life of obedience and devotion, for the errors of my youth.”

It was with some difficulty that her friends could prevent her from instantly beginning her journey, even in her weak state ; but their representations of the anxiety she

would cause to her father should she be taken ill on the road, at length persuaded her not to move till she had regained her strength. She had never yet mentioned her husband, and Dr. Montague thought it better never to allude to him in any way, as, now that he was gone, it was quite unnecessary to inform her of more of his unworthiness than she was already acquainted with, as she evidently wished to throw a veil over the past; and about six weeks after, they prepared to remove to Rome, where Dr. Montague hoped she would be more likely to recover her spirits than she ever could be in Naples.

The day previous to their departure, Julia begged Dr. Montague would come to her alone, and then, with a pale countenance and trembling voice, she said—

“ You must have observed, my best friend, that I have hitherto carefully avoided naming my unfortunate husband to you; but do not suppose I have been silent because I bear him enmity. May the Almighty have pardoned him for all his sins, as freely as I forgive him for all the misery he caused me.

But I would (if possible) for the future forget every circumstance relative to my Italian life, or remember it only in never-ceasing prayers of thankfulness for having been at last brought through all my fiery trials in safety ! Will you undertake, my dear Dr. Montague, to let my father know my wishes on this subject, and beseech him to spare my feelings by never asking me any questions regarding my husband, which it would pain me inexpressibly to answer ; and you can tell him what you consider necessary of all that has happened ?”

It may be imagined that Dr. Montague readily set her mind at rest by promising to explain everything to Mr. Bellfield, and to request him to cast an oblivion over the past as she desired.

Julia amply rewarded the good Giovanni for his faithful services, and, having strongly recommended him to her English banker (Mr. Wilson), she had the pleasure of seeing him taken into his service before she left Naples.

Of Riccardo nothing had been seen or

heard since the night of the Marchese's death, when he left the house, carrying with him some jewels and plate belonging to the latter, which he was known to have in his care.

Palazzo Landini was sold immediately upon the Marchesa quitting it, and also the remains of the Calabrian property, and Dr. Montague afterwards heard that many were the debts left unpaid beyond what the value of these could produce; but Julia made no inquiries, and he therefore never communicated these particulars to her.

They had a prosperous journey to Rome, in which they were accompanied by the amiable Renzils, and each mile that carried the young widow further from the scene of all her sorrows, seemed to restore her to new life, and her recovery was daily more rapid than the most sanguine hopes of her friends could have anticipated.

As soon as the season was sufficiently advanced, the party proceeded northwards as quickly as possible, and by the middle of May they found themselves once more safe

in England. It would be vain to attempt describing the mixture of feelings which nearly overpowered our heroine when she re-entered the home of her youth and was received in the fond arms of her father. Grief, and joy, and the recollection of all she had endured since she left it, by turns filled her mind, and she could only weep and cling to her parent, as if she feared that some cruel destiny might again separate her from him.

Mr. Bellfield, who had quite sunk under the loss of his eldest daughter, seemed to find a balm for all his afflictions in having his darling Julia restored to him, and he could not bear her to be a moment out of his sight.

Together they talked for hours and days of their lamented Harriet, and Julia, after listening to all the particulars of her sister's last moments, exclaimed—

“I feel that I should be guilty of ingratitude to my God, were I to repine that I have not been permitted again to behold her. It was a chastisement I more than

deserved when I left you both, and as such I humbly receive it."

Mordaunt had delicately withdrawn from Mr. Bellfield's house before Julia's arrival, but when, after a few months, the father and daughter left town and took up their residence at their country seat, which was only a few miles from Mordaunt Park, Dr. Montague and his nephew were among their first visitors, and after a few interviews all embarrassment ceased between Charles and Julia.

Harriet was an inexhaustible subject of conversation to them, and from Mordaunt Julia heard many interesting traits of her sister's affection for her, which were not known to Mr. Bellfield, as Harriet had not the same reserve with Charles, and could freely impart to him all her fears and hopes and wishes respecting Julia, in which he warmly sympathised.

The intimacy which in Italy commenced under such very different circumstances, soon, to the delight of Mr. Bellfield and Dr. Montague, ripened into the most sincere

attachment. Julia had at last become sensible of Mordaunt's worth, and had found out by bitter experience, that with an Englishman of steady religious principles, and with tastes and habits congenial to her own, an Englishwoman can alone find happiness in the married state.

The reader will not therefore be surprised to learn that in about two years after she became a widow, while walking in one of the beautiful dells of Mordaunt Park (which she now warmly joined Mordaunt in declaring far surpassed that of San' Silvestro), Julia consented to become his bride, adding —“I hope, dear Charles, I am now more worthy of you than when you last sued for my hand ; at least it shall be the study of my life to merit your affection.”

We need not repeat the enraptured reply of the lover, or the joy expressed by the father and uncle when they found that their ardent wishes were at length accomplished.

The *English marriage* of the lovely Julia (who, entirely restored to health and vivacity, was more beautiful than ever) shortly

after took place, and never has she had cause to repent of it. Mutual esteem and perfect confidence daily endear them more to each other. A numerous family are springing up around them, promising to possess all the virtues of their parents, and the forming of whose minds is the greatest delight of the happy pair.

These little ones are the most precious pets and the joy of their grandfather and their dear old uncle, particularly a little Julia, the very picture of her mamma, and for whom grandpapa Bellfield already begins to talk of finding a husband, and of seeing her happily settled before he dies.

"And I shall take special care," whispers Julia to Mordaunt, "whenever that event does occur, to have a solemn promise from her *futur* that he will never take her to Italy. To others, perhaps, a jaunt there may be attended with no bad consequences; but to a child of mine I cannot doubt that the very air would be pernicious; and I trust, none of my girls shall ever breathe it."

And now, having finished our "Neapolitan

Marriage" and happily brought about our English one, we shall leave Charles and Julia to end their days, we trust, in as much felicity as in this world of trial can reasonably be expected. We must not, however, omit saying a few words respecting the worthy Renzils, who were invited to pay Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt a visit soon after their marriage ; and, as young Renzil (who still continued delicate) found the climate of England suit him better than that of his native land, where he was never equal to performing his clerical duties, Mordaunt presented his mother and him with a pretty little cottage in his park, where they continued to reside, happy in the society of their friends and respected by all who knew them ; and on the death of Madame Renzil, which happened about ten years after the marriage of Mordaunt and Julia, they prevailed upon Renzil to take up his residence entirely with them. He acts as their private chaplain and preceptor to their boys, and it is highly probable he will never leave them.

Merlin, the happiest and most important personage in Mordaunt Park (after her lady), rules over the nurses and all the establishment with undisputed sway; but her kind heart and invariable good humour procure her a ready and willing obedience from all the domestics, with whom she is a great favourite.

And now, gentle reader, I shall take my leave, most gratefully thanking you if you have had the patience to follow me through this story of Neapolitan life, which I am fully aware must appear very dull and uninteresting when compared with the numerous entertaining volumes of tales which are now daily published; but if my attempt to describe a Neapolitan *ménage* (which, I trust, I have done without either prejudice or exaggeration) shall even in one instance induce a countrywoman to examine dispassionately the Neapolitan character and habits (even without putting their religion into the question), and to think well before she commits the folly of uniting herself for

life to one of the nation, I shall consider myself amply repaid for my trouble, and shall covet no other encomium upon my NEAPOLITAN MARRIAGE.

THE END.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.



